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ATLANTIC GATEWAY

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GREEN VOLCANO

TEN-A-PENNY PEOPLE

IN THE CAN

IRELAND —
ATLANTIC GATEWAY

Jim Phelan

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Introduction

EVEN five years ago any political prophet who referred to 'the extinction of France as a nation' was regarded as an eccentric or a downright poseur. To-day we are singing 'The last time I saw Paris' with a wistful, half-incredulous, little gasp of pain. France is gone.

Even two years ago anyone suggesting that the small insignificant country called Ireland could be terrifyingly, vitally important to the defence of Western Europe and the United States was either scorned or taken as jesting. To-day news-readers on both sides of the Atlantic are becoming aware of the importance. Ireland is still extant as a political entity.

A single blunder or misunderstanding may destroy the opportunities for conscious and active consolidation of Ireland's position. Blunders in Irish affairs have almost been *de rigueur* in British politics for many centuries. In the past they have not mattered—much. This time one mistake on the part of the British might mean disaster for the British. But it would mean extinction for the Irish.

This book is the partisan statement of an anti-Nazi Irishman. Its *raison d'être* is the prevention of blunders. The old division of the world into manifold bits with curious names belongs with Queen Anne and Henri Quatre. We had better dispense with the use of those myriad place-names and the confusion of thought they bring with them. East of Calais, to the Soviet frontiers, is death. West of Calais, to New York and Seattle, across the Pacific and beyond Vladivostock, is continued existence as we knew it, and the hope of a larger life.

East and west of the Calais line—that is the division now. Ireland belongs to the West, even more than Britain does. To ensure a swift, unimpeded acceptance by the Irish of that

position, some knowledge is necessary on this side of the water. That knowledge is by no means general, for various reasons. In this struggle, where the Atlantic Ocean is almost half of the Western territory, there is no time to plead ignorance in excuse for mistake. The few necessary facts are here presented with the bias and prejudice of one whose personal survival depends upon his remaining a 'citizen of the West'.

JIM PHELAN

WIGGINTON, 1941

CHAPTER ONE

Basic Difficulties

FEAR, inertia, cupidity, short-sightedness, and tradition are the main factors operative in holding a small country neutral. More precisely, these forces help to maintain the pose of neutrality past danger-point, since in modern war the term neutrality is a misnomer. The case of Denmark in 1940 is a perfect example. Merely by existing, however innocently, a small country sometimes becomes a menace to one side or the other in a giant war. The Eire statesman who asked, in Parliament, 'Who the Irish were to be neutral against?' crystallized the matter very neatly.

Of the factors named as neutrality-makers, first place is almost always given to tradition. (For indeed political myopia is no monopoly of small-nation diplomats.) In British-Irish affairs such a mistake is easy to make. There are several centuries of very bitter history. The British man-in-the-street, and most British writers, regretfully take it for granted that 'anti-British prejudice' is the major cause of the delay in completing a rapprochement between the two countries. Tradition is important, in Ireland as elsewhere, but it is given its correct place in the list of neutrality-factors above.

Fortunately for the Western peoples, the powerful and efficient Nazi propaganda in Ireland north and south is also based on the fallacy that national tradition is supreme. Almost daily the Nazi propagandists assume that the Irish shopkeeper or peasant stays awake at night consumed by a burning hatred of all things English. Only the Irish, in America or at home, grasp the full ludicrous comedy of that assumption. The most effective counter, from the British side, would be to publish the percentage of Eire-men in, say, the R.A.F. That

would be giving information to the enemy—with a vengeance. (The Irish have been crowding into the R.A.F. for the last eighteen months. One can find canteen-bars where only Gaelic is spoken. It is only necessary to notice the names in the news, or in the reports of decoration-events. So much for tradition.)

Once these few facts are grasped, once the 'Of course the Irish hate us; mainly our fault; can't be helped', formula is dropped, an examination of the other factors becomes possible. Some American humorist said he didn't mind if a man were ignorant; the trouble commenced when he knew a lot of things that weren't so. Nearly everyone in Britain 'knows' that the Irish are anti-British because of ancient grievances. A swift survey of the political and economic commitments of the various groups in Eire will dissipate that 'knowledge'.

Thereafter the other forces which make for friction in the working of the Western war-machine may be examined without the hamper of preconception, so that a decision may be reached as to whether Eire's best interests are being served by her Government's present attitude towards the war-of-the-world. If they are, any further inquiry resolves itself into a search for a political altruism never very prominent in European affairs and noticeably absent to-day. Since the present author, like most of the Irish, is a political realist, this book will be of no help in any such search. Luckily it is not necessary.

There is grave danger in over-simplification. It would be folly, and worse, to imagine the Irish of to-day as loving the British people or Government, or joyously joining in praise-pæans of the glorious Empire. Some luckless wish-thinkers, meaning well, do seriously attempt to disseminate such ideas. Not even the British man-in-the-street would for a moment consider them as anything but drivel.

A diminutive mahout may help a bogged elephant out of a swamp, not because he loves it but because he will die if he

hasn't the big quadruped to carry him home and help with his work. Commonsense dictates that he should remember the time the big fellow tried to tusk him, and guard against a repetition. Certainly the help does not imply a delight in being tusked, or a belief in the rectitude of tuskings. The Irish are like that. The sooner it is realized that there is in Ireland neither love nor hatred of the British, the better it will be for both peoples.

To the extent that the English people hate the Spaniards, whose ancestors tortured English prisoners in the days of the Inquisition, or the Dutch who were the major terror-enemies of this island at one time, or the French, whose great-grandfathers scared their great-grandfathers cold in the days of Napoleon, thus far do the Irish 'hate' the British. No farther. The average Englishman knows the stories, but they mean little. The English won those wars; the emotional residue is almost nil, and rightly so. The Irish won their war; the result is the same.

(Ask the nearest Irishman or woman, under twenty-four years of age, some question about the insurrection of 1916. The almost inevitable response is, 'Ah, but that was in the troubles; a long time ago; before I was born.' There can hardly be a British citizen who has not had some such conversation, more than once, yet the foolish preoccupation with 'National Antipathy' persists, in spite of the facts. Hitherto it was merely silly, and did little harm; nowadays it becomes a Nazi weapon—in the hands of the common-man of Britain.)

Tradition there is, and it is powerful, mainly consisting as it does of stories about massacre, robbery, and destruction. It is not necessary to take Irish authorities; several sound English works recapitulate the stories too. The main reason for the persistence of the war-stories is that Ireland is largely peasant. Peasants, anywhere, do not read fiction much. Detective-novels, thrillers, and the like do not sell in Ireland to any great extent. Their place is supplied by the stories

passed on at the fireside in the evening. Thus the Irishman, especially in a peasant district, knows about, say, the massacre of Drogheda, or the Treaty of Limerick which was broken by the British. (Both stories can be checked in the British Museum; they will correspond to an astounding degree with the version given by a peasant perhaps semi-literate. That is how tradition works.)

But the descendants of the English soldiers who 'did' the Drogheda massacre would not have the faintest idea where Drogheda is, let alone having any strong ideas about the place-name. The Irish know. History is winnowed down to a concentration of personal, practical, realistic details, in a peasant country. This is in large part the explanation of the 'long memory for political grievances' which is supposed to be the major factor in the Irish make-up. The remaining part is furnished by the fact that middle-aged people alive to-day in Ireland participated in the writing of the last chapter of the history. To suggest, as various ingenuous writers have done, that the Irish should forget 'their grievances' is to suggest that Ireland should cease to be a peasant country and should not have been a peasant country for several centuries past. It is very difficult for people in an industrial civilization like Britain to grasp these facts, but they are facts and have to be grasped to-day. Merely to say that it is very silly is—very silly.

It would be the height of folly to ask the present writer to 'forget' certain incidents of his own youth, or to 'forget' that his father and his uncles were jailed as young men, or that his grandfather and great-uncles were jailed in an earlier day of the same struggle. But only greater folly would expect him *therefore* to attack his friends in an English village pub! Yet some such reasoning is behind most British thought—and nearly all British writing—about Ireland to-day. It is painful and dangerous both.

Men fight in wars because they have something to protect or something to gain, or because they are afraid of the other

side, or because they are afraid to refuse. There may be other motives, such as honour, love of justice, desire for abstract freedom, innate heroism, personal revenge. The present writer can only point to the authorities on war psychology, and to the fact that in four wars he has not encountered those other motives anywhere. Certainly they were never operative in Ireland.

The Irish fought the British, intermittently, from 1190 to 1921. Consequently it is small matter for wonder if the national history is a kind of serial-melodrama, in which the part of villain is always played by the British. In every war-phase there was much talk and song of freedom, liberty, and similar subjects. But always the orators, at any rate, got down to bedrock and showed the solid substratum of economic clash.

The Irish fought for pennies and shillings, for bits of turf and fields that might yield potatoes, for the retention of a silk-industry and the keeping of call-ports for American liners. (Strange irony that Cobh and Lough Swilly, now strategically vital to the West, should have been 'squeezed out in favour of Southampton and Liverpool—and that every Republican propagandist, in Britain and the United States, should have stressed that argument in the war against the British!)

The earlier deprivations were cruder and less 'political'. Land was taken in huge pieces, and the owners thrown out to starve. (See any standard English history on the Cromwellian Plantations.) Naturally it was easy to get those dispossessed to believe in liberty and national honour and getting their land back. That period furnished an enormous crop of songs and stories. One unfortunate factor was that there really couldn't be a single good word said for the English. Wherefore the next generation of Irish added their own injuries to the land-deprivation of their fathers—and fought another round.

So it went on, for many centuries. But in the last round or

two the interests of the Irish capitalists, peasants, church, working people, and middle-class all coincided. The result was the great revival of national honour and love of freedom which culminated in the struggle against the Black-and-Tans and the Treaty of 1921.

Out of it all, buried deeply in the fibres of the Irish, came the fear of England in shillings and pence. It was swiftly and naturally transmuted into anti-British prejudice. The fear is nearly gone, and the last reasons for it will have to be dissipated swiftly now, in the interests of Western survival. Wherefore an Irish writer can laugh to scorn the stories of Britain-hatred, and suggest some essential measures for mutual protection.

Second only to the national-prejudice-and-ancient-grievance fallacy is the myth that the Catholic Church in Ireland is an anti-British force. A flat *démenti* would be the best answer, but would probably be misunderstood. Dozens of Irish leaders, who have seen their best men excommunicated and, genuinely religious, terrified by the excommunication, for their part in the fight against the British, laugh bitterly when that myth comes up for notice. It seems incredible that the fallacy should persist, yet it does persist, in spite of the fact that year after year Pastoral letters and other pronouncements of the Irish Hierarchy swayed and influenced the fighting Irish away from the I.R.A. and into the paths of 'peace', i.e. submission to the British.

No one who knows the present writer's work will need to be told that he is no protagonist of the Church in Irish politics! But it would be madness, in this time of the world-splitting, to allow even one wretched misconception to remain. The Church has always been pro-British—or anti-revolution which means the same thing—until quite recently, and the slight change has only come under terrific pressure. Who seeks the reason for Eire's hesitation to accept the concomitants of her Atlantic situation will not find it in Catholic antagonism, any more than in national hatred.

The fear of England, in shillings and pence—this has been behind every prideful patriotic utterance and struggle. It is still there, in part. But it is going. The removal of its last vestiges can only be carried out by the British. It can only be done with knowledge and foresight, and with the abandonment of nursery-stories for which there is no time now. Whoever can clear his mind of the two main fallacies shown here may swiftly grasp the threads of Irish life, past and present. Skimming the trivial surface of newspaper-silliness and minor political chicanery on both sides of the Irish Sea, he may discover what the Eire-men are doing, and what they ought to be doing, and why.

It may further be discovered what should be done to help, in this regrouping of the world where Eire at present resembles a papier mâché foundation stone. Always with the assumption that having discovered it one will attempt to ensure that it is done, thoroughly—and quickly.

That way, we can be done with the folly which leaves the finest airports and naval harbours in the world unused, while the Atlantic's bottom is being paved with America's war-tools and Britain's food. That way, every British or American submarine-chaser can have its effectiveness *multiplied four-fold overnight*. Only ignorance of the problem stands in the way. Sometimes ignorance is a major crime. Now let there be an end of it.

Potatoes and Porter

UNTIL roughly the end of the seventeenth century, the Irish and the English were engaged in a fairly continuous fight. The struggle was on almost equal terms, and was therefore a long-drawn-out business. The British won every round, but only by very narrow margins. Thus was necessitated a repetition of the affair, generation by generation. Until about 1690, by which time the two peoples had been fighting for about five hundred years.

It is all very silly nowadays—except to the Colonel Blimps on both sides of the Irish Sea—but naturally it was regarded as very serious indeed at the time. The Irish would have been only too glad and willing to ‘take over’ Britain if they could have managed it. The English wanted to take over Ireland, and did. But the balance of power between the two peoples, both largely agricultural then, was so small that no final decision could be reached. Until about 1690.

Thereafter Britain moved swiftly towards the mechanized form of life we now know, with Sheffield and Birmingham in the background and the West End of London on the surface. Ireland remained peasant. In the subsequent struggles the odds were all on the British side. More, the British Empire was taking shape—and Ireland was beginning to be regarded as a British colony. That hurt, a great deal.

The explanation does not seem to have occurred to anyone, Irish or English, except a few psychologists, but it is fairly obvious nevertheless. Britain ought to have been an *Irish* colony, of course; then all would have been fair, legal, virtuous, and so forth.

The whole business is very silly to-day, and little importance is attached to it except in England. In Britain it is still

almost impossible to realize that during those centuries the two nations were much alike. (Compare Shakespeare's dialogue with the current vocabularies of Donegal or Tipperary!) The very natural—and very foolish—pre-occupation with 'National Dignity' left us a heritage of follies, that is all. When the Irish raided into Normandy and Spain, or across France to the heights of Switzerland—that was heroism and warlike nobility. When the English did ditto into Ireland, it was robbery and murder!

Of course it *was* theft and homicide, broadly speaking, but it or the impulse thereto was on both sides. Even to-day some few cretins in both countries do really think in terms of 'taking over' adjacent lands. Unfortunately no law at present exists under which they can be dealt with as anachronisms. In the late middle ages everyone thought it very proper indeed to take over places. Empires grew out of such ideas. But not the Irish Empire. That necessarily came later and differed in kind.

After the end of the seventeenth century the odds against Ireland, in the struggle of propinquity, increased in geometrical proportion. Britain passed forward into industrialization. Ireland stayed—or was kept, it does not matter now—primarily agricultural. The 'racial differences' began to grow up. The enclosure of the last commons in England, and the extinction of the peasantry, removed the final resemblance. It is no accident that 'The Deserted Village' a poem described by H. G. Wells as a 'pamphlet on enclosures', was written by an Irishman. No one else could have perceived the differentiation that was taking place.

It is not to be supposed that the would-be ruling groups in Ireland took the enforced inertia all peacefully. Even the noble Irish, alas, are not immune to the pull of economic laws. The middle-class emergent, struggling to be born in Ireland as it was being born in Britain and France, registered protest—in blood; generally peasant blood. The risings of 1798 and 1803 served as punctuation-marks. But it was

perfectly hopeless, of course. England was too near the continent of Europe and had too great a start. Ireland was thrown back upon potatoes. No mills, no factories, no swarming industrial populace, no profits and dividends—just potatoes.

As things turned out, it was very fortunate for the Irish. There is no doubt whatever that a wide, deliberate and carefully planned pressure destroyed or hamstrung the incipient industries of Ireland. This was English villainy, as far as those who might have owned the factories were concerned. In 1830, 1848, '65, '67, '82, the Irish made armed objection to the villainy. They lost on each occasion, luckily as it happened, but of course they did not realize *that* at the time. Britain moved still further forward to control of continents and the dynamo whirligig of industrialization. Turf, wheat, cattle, and potatoes still filled the Irish life. Already the two peoples were ceasing to recognize one another.

But inevitably, since capital will not be denied, the Harrigans and Murphys and O'Briens were beginning to copy in small what the entrepreneurs of London were doing in large. Inevitably also, while Adam Smith and Karl Marx would have laughed, they borrowed the help of the 'traditional enemy' at so much per cent. Alongside of the potatoes grew up silk-weaving, woollen mills, shipbuilding, and Guinness's Brewery. The mechanization of some part of Ireland was completed. Its tempo was at least as fierce as that of Britain's. The only difference was that Britain now had to shoulder the responsibility of an empire and the struggle for world markets. The Irish had to shoulder nothing, except the sack with the profits in.

The reference is, of course, to the small-capitalist class which grew up on the fringe of Ireland during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Seven-eighths of the country still remained peasant. The condition of the people, for the most part, was very bad. All the blame was laid on

the British. Some of it *was* theirs—about half. That state of affairs persisted almost to the outbreak of the 1914 war.

The unemployed or underpaid man, the land-starved peasant whose progenitors had owned many acres, the small struggling farmer and miserable penny-squeezing shopkeeper, were told and needed little telling, that all their woes were due to the unscrupulous brutal rapacity of the English. Actually there was a sound and demonstrable basis for the accusation—the ordinary workings of capital dealing with competitors. A silk industry had been crushed by the—perfectly legitimate—cutting-off of markets. The Irish ports of Lough Swilly and Cobh, calling-points for American liners, had been ‘closed’ on a flimsy pretext, to the advantage of Liverpool and other British seaport towns. Things like that had happened. In the heat of the protest against them, few of the Irish noticed that there were equal or more serious ‘wrongs’ being perpetrated much nearer home. Thus already in 1914, Ireland was ripe for kicking over the traces.

The real opportunity did not come for a couple of years. By the time the war was two years old, Irish capital was ready to emerge from its swaddling-clothes, the peasants were more than ready to take some of the ranches for cultivation, the badly paid or workless men of the cities were ready for anything. Under such circumstances a revolution was inevitable. The Irish Republic was proclaimed in 1916.

From the stamping-out of that Republican force commenced a struggle that lasted for five years. (It was really the American Revolution all over again, smaller but no less intense.) There was much bad blood.

In 1921, at the end of the war between the Black-and-tans and the I.R.A., came the treaty which established the Irish Free State. The best that can be said about it is that it was a very funny Treaty indeed. No more ambiguous document ever received the signature of a plenipotentiary—as the Irish and the British have learnt to their cost in the intervening twenty years. Like the forcing of a card by a sharper, or

the slipping of a pea from under a shell by an expert, a 'state' called Northern Ireland came into existence on the strength of a vague reference to a referendum. The other parts were equally loose in wording. (De Valera's Government has demonstrated *that*, if nothing else!) But at any rate the Irish industrialists were now 'free' to proceed with the making of money for themselves instead of for the hated English.

The Treaty was a personal and political triumph for Mr. Lloyd George. It really did 'pass the baby' to the Irish—as was evidenced by the Civil War which broke out almost immediately. It also paved the way for the tragically-anomalous position of to-day. Its function was to dispense with trouble from the Irish quarter for twenty years or so. The Treaty did that; but the twenty years have passed, and now the reckoning is here. Because that trickery-treaty left the Atlantic's edge undefended. *Now.*

The position of the Irish middlemen or small capitalists since 1922 is almost incomprehensible to anyone outside. Yet, since they are the main weakness of the West to-day, it must be understood, and thoroughly, if mistakes are to be avoided. Briefly, they had gambled everything they owned, life, liberty, and wealth, on winning the war against the British—or that particular round of it! They did win, and instead of profits they got the jail and the firing-squad as before—just as if the hated and bloodthirsty English were still in Dublin. The first Irish Free State was a British Colony, voluntarily, which the Ireland of previous centuries has never been. In its make-up there was no place for the middleman. Hence the Civil War and the refilling of the jails in 1922 and 1923.

One must imagine the owner of a small drapery business, competing against, say, Harrods or Selfridges, to realize what happened to the small capitalists of Ireland in 1922 and for a decade thereafter. They genuinely had fought, from 1916 onwards. They had faced the prison and the firing-squad. Then later they had discovered that they were rebels

still—against themselves, the Irish. The Treaty of 1921 really was a triumph for Mr. Lloyd George. While it lasted.

Almost anyone in Britain would think of the first, post-revolutionary Irish Free State Government as a collection of tough hard-bitten democrats, with Republican slogans on their lips and revolvers on their hips. It was much more like a committee representing British business interests. Perhaps the best way to drive home the point is to state that Mr. Burgess, of the London and North-Western Railway, was one of the first members of the first Senate. It was that kind of Government, and it lasted for ten years. During which time it all but exterminated the Irish small-capitalist, the middleman.

But in a country composed almost entirely of peasants, small farmers, and little shopkeepers, it is extremely difficult to keep the middleman quite outside. Short of mass murder, which many De Valera supporters would say was tried! It took ten years, but eventually, with due legal gravity and in accordance with correct procedure, the Irish Free State changed hands. The large capitalists, with their tentacles and interests in Britain, were out; the middleman, led by the most typical middle-class politician of them all, Eamonn De Valera, were in. They sat back, to take at last those profits hard-won by seven years of jail and bullet and eight years of desperate political intrigue.

Every conservative observer predicted disaster. The country was unmistakably in a bad way in 1932, when the De Valera 'crowd' took over. To the surprise of everyone—not least of the middlemen themselves—a slow but constant upward movement became marked almost immediately. That quite undoubted progress is one of the major snags for Britain and America to-day.

Politically, the De Valera party performed acrobatics. Economically they achieved quasi-miracles. Sheltering behind the ambiguities of Mr. Lloyd George's Treaty, they waged an economic war against the British, lost it, and

collected the spoils nevertheless. Despite the marked contradictions of Eire's position (the name of the place was changed quite early), the status of the populace has risen, infinitesimally but continually. Cut off from world markets, thrown back upon their own resources, the Fianna Fail Government still attained a kind of milk-and-water republicanism, which is almost invulnerable. Almost. Desperation mingled with self-reliance seems to be the formula. It is more than academically interesting to remember that the phrase might stand as a loose translation of the almost-forgotten slogan 'Sinn Fein'.

Because even now the middlemen are convinced, or were convinced until but recently, that the steady progress could be maintained, world-war or no world-war. In a separatist future, it might, in their view, be accelerated. It is no news to British readers that Eire is a Republic in everything but name, already. So far as the quasi-republican politicians are concerned, the correct course is to stand apart and continue to progress. Neutrality, as they see it, helps. If the British lose the war, that would help still more.

It is a terrifying and suicidal fallacy. But it will have to be proved so, very quickly, if irretrievable harm is not to be done, innocently and ignorantly, by the Irish believers in the inevitability of gradualness.

Let it be said at once that nothing in the least degree helpful has come from the British side of the sea up to now. Quite the contrary. The decisive factor is the Irish middlemen's fear of England, measured in shillings. There really are lunatics in Britain to-day, some few with power, who obviously attach more importance to the shillings than to the fate of the West. In so far as they exist and are active, they repeatedly prove the suspicion and fear of the Eire small-men, who are in power in Eire whether people like it or not. Anyone who has seen a shopkeeper clutching his till in an air-raid can understand them. Making grabs at his footling little till is not the best way to reassure such a person. Yet

even now, in these desperate days, that is the only practical politics contemplated by some statesmen, with regard to Eire.

Perhaps it is supererogatory to point out that no peasant author is no admirer of the Eire middlemen. But dislike of a thing is no excuse for lying about it—to one's own eventual detriment. Shopkeepers these Eire middlemen may be, but they have a perfect right to choose their own way of life, however mean and miserable. The fact that their wretched little shop *now* stands fairly in the middle of what should be a wide unhampered roadway is matter for action. Not for irritation—of the Blimp brand. That way lies at best delay which is dangerous, and at worst another and more dangerous Syria, the more menacing by geographical accident. Syria at any rate belongs in the East. Ireland is the Atlantic's doorstep.

£12,000,000 i.s. 6d. per day the war costs at present. There would be apoplexy cases in certain London clubs if that one-and-six were increased to three shillings, say, by the undignified abandonment of the long-term, red-tape, stereotyped routine and procedure of inter-island haggling which is the contemporary equivalent of what used to be called 'firm' government of the Irish. A few antediluvian politicians here do really try all the ancient outworn tricks against the Eire rulers *now*. Their only achievement is to 'frighten the life out of' the tiny money-grubbers in Eire, and make them clutch their pennies into closer safety, and boast that they were right all along—that the bloody murdering English never wanted anything from anyone except to take away their living. The fear of England, in pounds and pennies, is very real and well-based west of Howth.

It was fatally easy to fall into their mistaken groove. Slowly but very certainly improving their own condition, and even yielding a slightly fuller life to the mass of the populace, they expect to continue on that line. The neutrality is genuine—all the half-lies and full-blooded falsehoods notwithstanding—and the Irish would naturally be too

frightened of a Britain at war to have it otherwise. If, or rather when as they see it, Britain loses the war, a regnant Nazism will be grateful for the strict neutrality. At the back of their minds they feel that they ought not to be neutral. Merely by being so they are definitely hampering the organization and defence of the Western people. For that, the Nazis will in gratitude leave them alone.

Perhaps it is best after all that an Irishman should make the comment, 'Oh, yeah!'

CHAPTER THREE

The Wispeen o' Straw

THE Irish in the British army and air force are fighting against the Nazis. They are not fighting *for* anything. Which is not so good. Because there some 500,000 like them, back home in Ireland, who have not even begun to think about the war in terms of a struggle intimately concerning themselves. It is not necessary for an Irish writer to boast that they are some of the finest fighting people in the world. The British generals can do that. It is only necessary to point to the criminal fatuity of ignoring or antagonizing such a force. That is being done, deliberately and expensively. The methods, attitude—and phraseology—of some authoritative persons in Britain to-day, with reference to the Government and people of Eire, are those of 1866. Any student of history knows what those methods and that attitude produced in 1867. They produced the Fenian movement, with a membership of three millions in the United States and an armed, militant, Britain-hating peasantry at home.

Incredible as it may seem, even *that* result is apparently considered desirable by some few morons-with-power who know and care less about the need for consolidating Atlantic Defence than the Irish peasants themselves. You take the traditional line, stand no nonsense from the treasonable hounds, order them to come in and do as they're told, then act firmly if they refuse; and of course you take the air bases and naval harbours, if the blighters won't hand them over voluntarily when ordered. Then everything is safe and regular, and you get on with the war.

Practically every London-Irish journalist has had the honour of being 'sent for' by a wholly unauthorized person, holding no commission or position in the British Government or

Forces, who with kindly nonchalance—and lunatic self-confidence—indicated what should be written about Ireland. The terms of reference were as shown at the end of the last paragraph, and were pre-Gladstone. In every case initial anger gave way to amused tolerance. Then it was discovered that the patronizing gentleman was not really an escaped lunatic, that he had ‘friends’, that the friends thought as he did, that *apparently* the policy of the British Government did freakishly enough coincide with the views of the apostle of firmness.

That is not folly, not even attempted suicide, it gets very close to treason. Because not merely is a splendid fighting force being hamstrung or antagonized; the Irish peasants, a force no Eire Government dare ignore, are being led to the belief that the British people want to steal their airports and harbours—that the ‘taking-over’ days are back again. Since this is incorrect (or if it is incorrect) it seems sheer madness that there has been no debate on Ireland in the British Parliament. In the absence of any such debate, the gentleman mentioned and his friends can continue to function to the detriment of the British Government. Worse, to the serious injury of the British people. Still worse, to the grave hampering of the American people and government. Worst of all, to the disadvantage of the Irish. For if the British lose this war there will be no Ireland. Which is one reason why this book is written.

The antediluvian politicians who talk about ‘firmness’ (as if there had been no Treaty of 1921!) know nothing about peasants. Few people do, in this country, because there are hardly any here. Indeed, the average English reader often shows in conversation a belief that a peasant is a farm-worker. So he is, of course—but he owns his farm. A radical difference, because men will fight first to protect something; and a peasant thinks of farms—and his own farm—first of all. When the Irish peasantry can be shown that they will cease to be Irish peasants if the Western peoples lose the Atlantic,

there will be no more illusions about Ireland's place in the new Western line-up. But gentlemen with the 'whiff-of-grapeshot' outlook, talking about firmness, will not convince them. Quite the contrary.

It is not easy to tell people in England about these farmers who are relatively so numerous in Ireland north and south. In Britain, 'farm' means a lot of buildings and byres, with tractors and threshing-machines grouped around a huge yard adjacent to a large snug house with garage and garden. In Ireland it means a patch of earth with a cottage on it, where a lone man slaves for incredible hours, generally without any farm-machinery and often only with borrowed horses. Hour for hour, his pay is about half of an English farm labourer's. But he works many hours—and he is his own master. When he wants to stop for a drink or a smoke, he stops. The plans and decisions about seeding and cropping are made by himself. Above all, he knows the patch of earth intimately, and belongs to it.

It took several thousand years to develop the 'ground-grubbing complex' which we call the peasant outlook. Violence and worse are needed to destroy it. And now, in this year of the world-ripping, with potential starvation looming upon many quarters of the world, we are realizing that it had better not be destroyed after all.

Centuries ago the peoples of every land learnt that lesson first, and only forgot it in the dizzy-dance of industrialization. The peasants of Ireland or the Balkans, of Mexico or France, *never* forgot it. Thus it is difficult at the best of times to convince a peasant about the importance of factories or ports or anything except agriculture. Only if shown that on the port or factory depends the fate of *his* farm is he interested.

It is a narrow and mercenary outlook. Even if it be preferable to and more generous than the outlook of those who make war for profit, it is, nevertheless, worse than parochial. But it is a fact that peasants anywhere can achieve a monumental calm in the face of political cataclysms or

military disasters, ignoring everything unconnected with the problems of crop and seed.

Any time these forty years, news-readers have become, familiar with pictures of the peasant of this-or-that-place stoically carrying on with his tillage even while the great guns roar over his head. It is not stoicism or heroism—it is the centuries-old certainty that men can only continue on the surface of the earth by scratching that surface and getting out food. In the past, whoever won a war had perforce to leave the peasants more or less alone. Their lot is already so hard that hitherto there has been small profit for anyone in attacking them. In the past, the peasant belonged to the earth and the piece of earth to him, no matter what flag waved over it. In the past.

Thus it is impossible to interest the peasant in a war of attack, and almost impossible to arouse him from his lethargy even in a war of defence. He simply does not care. Successive governments in France learnt the lesson to their cost and too late in the end. The Irish revolutionary organizations had it driven home to them again and again. Anyone who has spoken to the tiny farmers in parts of Wales will have had the shock of realizing that all our clamour and urgency in political matters leave them almost cold. In Ireland, since it is not even 'his' war, the peasant is still more indifferent.

In land-wars the peasant will attack, or defend, with seemingly miraculous energy and tenacity. But that is another affair, something that seldom comes to the notice of the average news-reader. (The peasant might well say that in land-wars, which really matter, we of the cities are stupidly indifferent and lethargic!) No amount of propaganda, unless it can *demonstrate* that the ownership of their little farms is affected, can ever rouse peasants to military fervour. It may be said that they have no nationality and no patriotism. When scooped into armies, as in the Russian Tsarist army or the regiments of France, they make indifferent fighters and seize the first opportunity to go home and start tilling again.

It is not only irritating but ridiculous that the tempo of organization, in the vast industrial communities of the anti-Nazi West, can be hastened or slowed down by the reactions of such a bovine and unimaginative person as the peasant fairly depicted above. But it is a fact that it can happen. Geographical accident and a few centuries of history have combined to make Ireland—almost literally—a stumbling-block on the edge of the Atlantic. Whether it remains or ceases to be so depends in large part upon the peasants—or rather upon the British approach to them.

Because those people have shown, many times, that they can fight with terrible concentration when they think the wretched little farms are endangered. Up to the present, the only hint of a threat to the Irish peasantry has come from—the friends of Britain. That is very foolish. Because such activities or hints thereof always throw the peasants into the arms of the I.R.A.

Of course the British Government does not want to take the peasants' farms away. (One is not postulating altruism—it is only necessary to show that there is no profit in it.) But the peasants are not by any means assured of *that*. Previous British Governments dispossessed or attempted to dispossess them. When the morons-with-power, and their friends in Ireland, talk their outworn claptrap about taking over; when naval and military writers argue in the British Press that, say, Blacksod Bay and Castletownbere should be grabbed; when no Government pronouncement put the whiff-of-grape-shot people in their place; when the I.R.A. man can justly point to the bad record of former British Governments and the criminal ignorance of the present, regarding Ireland—what is the peasant to think?

He thinks, bluntly, that if anyone comes to take his pitiful little acres he will fight! Not even David with Goliath fronted up to such incredible odds, but he would do it. And there is no one and nothing, except one or two writings of this kind, generally from Irish peasants anyway, to tell him that

he is in no danger from the British, but on the contrary. Now, one need not be a profound student of politics to wonder *why*.

It is as ridiculous to suppose that a British Government, engaged in a life-and-death struggle, would want to take away a lot of piddling farms averaging ten acres in extent, as to imagine that it might want to steal a child's rag doll in a Marseilles slum. Yet, only pronouncements suggestive of the opposite find their way into the British press. The type-article, from a brilliant naval writer stated bluntly—and incorrectly—that Cobh and Castletown and Lough Swilly were parts of the British Empire and should be 'occupied' forthwith. That is lunacy. It is not the policy of, say, Winston Churchill or Lord Beaverbrook or Ernest Bevin. But it was printed, in millions of a daily paper, and sold in Ireland, and used by the I.R.A., rightfully, as propaganda among the peasants. To the British observer there seems to be no reason in such activities.

There is a reason, though, and it gets right home to the heart of peasant life—to the detriment of Britain and of people like the present writer who want the Western nations organized quickly and the Atlantic Ocean made safe. It is almost elementary mathematics, and it applies in every country where there are peasants.

In an agricultural country with a small population, if the average holding is small (i.e. peasant), then simple subtraction shows that a few holdings must be very large indeed. That is the case in Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, many other countries. It is the old problem of ranch against tillage. It makes for land-wars—in which peasants have always performed military miracles. In Ireland the peasants never join the revolutionary or anti-British parties except as participants in a land-war. That still seems parochial, and of no immediate concern to the British people. Let us see.

A ranch is a vast island of pasture surrounded by a surf of peasants. Imagine thirty-thousand acres of mainly pasture

land, the property of one man, with no tillage and no growing thing except grass. Imagine a fringe of three thousand peasants surrounding it, each tilling some ten acres laboriously and casting covetous eyes across the fence to the giant estate where sheep and bullocks exist instead of corn and potatoes. That is an 'agrarian problem'. The phrase will be familiar.

Not so familiar will be the information that many of the biggest estates are rented in England. That is an accident of history and is gradually being adjusted. The De Valera Government has already made enormous strides in attempting to deal with the agrarian problems. The biggest of the ranches are being cut. (It is a variation of the British 'more tillage' campaign, but much more vital to the populace.) In these years of food dearth, almost anyone in Britain would say that was elementary common sense.

But certain persons—indeed they are only a fistful and they doubtless mean well—would prefer to see the ranches remain intact and the estate-dividing activities of the Eire Government restricted. That is their point of view, to which they are entitled. The fact that the same persons own the estates in question rather vitiates their atmosphere of impartiality. It would not matter, to England, now. Except for two things.

The first is that the ranches *mean* England, to the peasants. The second is that some of the owners, in Britain, have 'friends'. The nonchalant gentleman dictating what should be said and written about Ireland does not appear so lunatic in that light.

Even to the extent of misrepresenting the intentions and wishes of the British Government; even to the extent of fomenting or hoping for a land-war—which would be an excuse for firmness and a maintenance of the *status quo*; even to the extent of enlarging the militant I.R.A. by an enraged peasantry; even to the extent of making the Irish airports and naval harbours the symbol of difference between the two peoples; thus far some few will go in the quest for

profits *they will never see anyway*, even if their activities have the natural result and the Nazis instead of the Western peoples get the Atlantic.

And there is no Government pronouncement whatever about relations with Ireland. This, in the year when the waves of the Atlantic are more important than the streets of London and when the air bases and naval ports on its edge are the very heart-strings of America and Britain. While the threshold of the Atlantic is held by a government with a backing of peasants it cannot ignore, who stand clutching their pennies lest the British should take them away—for the ranchers—the only ‘authoritative’ pronouncements come from the ranchers or their friends. That is not folly. We peasants have a word for it, but it is obscene and cannot be written here.

As an Irish peasant, the present writer wishes to see his own class liquidated upward into a common-sense agriculture instead of downward into slavery and death. That upward liquidation can only come with the success of the Western peoples. A Nazi success would mean the end of the Irish peasantry. Vital to prevent that success is the swift use of the Atlantic-edge to maintain communications between the nations of the west. Antagonizing the Irish peasantry and the Government they back is not the quickest way to ensuring that use. The only result of such antagonism is to make safe, for a little while, the revenues of the ranchers.

It is not worth it. Even if they *have* friends.

Underground Ireland

It is a strange anomaly that, even under the terrible pressure of modern warfare, there are more sympathizers with Irish aloofness in England than in Eire. Once or twice the ordinary man in Britain has been whooped up into irritation with the Irish—generally by a newspaper article written by one of the ranchers' friends. But swiftly afterwards, each time, the majority relapsed into a sorrowful fatalism about the Eire people. Pity—great pity; not to have a good bunch of scrappers like that on your side. A shame, to have ships steaming past Blacksod, wasting two days and more, going to Plymouth or Harwich. A bloody muddle, but there you are; nothing to be done. A pity, just the same.

Any reader can test it—that is something very close to the average reaction in England. Even though based upon almost complete misinformation (such as that the Irish are anti-British, but it can't be helped) that stoical acceptance of the unpleasant fact is fairly general here.

There is nothing like it in Ireland, in any town of over two thousand population.

It is not ignorance of the problem that leaves so many of the Irish indifferent. They are 'not interested' in the present struggle primarily because they have made an appraisal of the factors already known. That appraisal indicates aloofness. Consequently the separatist-neutrality has had 'negative' backing—the best kind for a policy of doing nothing. Large numbers of the Irish did genuinely believe until very recently that Britain could not win the war. They were not alone in that belief. Thus elementary common sense would dictate the avoidance of trouble as long as possible.

The Irish have always been good people for jumping in

to implement forlorn hopes. Fontenoy, Cremona, La Bassee, South Africa, the Dardanelles, are some of the places that come to mind immediately. But the manning of a forlorn *hopelessness*, on behalf of an ancient enemy, with not even the traditional one-in-a-million chance—that would be contrary to human nature. Thus the shrug of the shoulders and the preoccupation with the 'more important' daily affairs of potatoes and land-wars and a reduced tea-ration.

The mistake is due to the incorrect appraisal of some facts hardly seen clearly by the British people themselves as yet. If the British are still confused about major issues, and about their own present and future place in the world, it would be ridiculous to expect the Irish to see more clearly in such matters. In Britain, the United States, Latin America, men are groping slowly towards a grasp of the new and necessary alignment of the world-groups. In fact—not merely in hope or theory—America begins now about three miles from the French coast. The Americans are beginning to realize it. When the Irish realize it their world-outlook, focused by elementary self-interest, will change overnight. Until then, they will be swayed largely, as in the past, by the subterranean forces about which so little of value is known here, the Irish Secret Societies.

With a long history of anti-imperial war and revolution, Ireland, like any such country, developed powerful secret organizations. The accidents of intercourse with Australia and America made them more powerful still. Relative prosperity among the enormous numbers of emigrant Irish provided a huge war-chest and made the secret societies a formidable force. For generations they have organized and directed the periodical acts of revolution. Most of them are still in existence, and most of their membership is in America.

The Irish Republican Brotherhood has been in existence for about a century. Some four-fifths of its membership and most of its funds have been located in America since about 1865. Until 1921, it had always been openly anti-British—

and of course rightly, since it was formed to rectify things the British now recognize to have been terrible abuses. People in Britain will be more familiar with one of its sub-sections, the I.R.A. In 1921, the Irish Republican Brotherhood split, about half taking the pro-British side in the formation of the Irish Free State. It is tragically amusing that this section, still the friends of *pre-war or pre-Churchill Britain*, should be a barrier to British-Irish understanding at present, because of that slightly-anachronistic friendship.

A Britain narrow and reactionary, drifting into appeasement or friendship with or open admiration of Fascism, the flatterer of Ribbentrops and helper of Francos, the shiftless and shameless Britain of the Munichers—it was this the Irish reactionary party admired. Now Britain has changed, but the Irish reactionaries cannot, without suffering financial loss. So they remain with the label of friends-of-the-British, while really being friends-of-reaction, the Nazi brand for preference. It is a curious irony; of course, there are many such in the swiftly-changing world to-day.

At any rate the 'Pro-British' ex-members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood do and will object to any swift settlement of Anglo-Irish differences. Such a settlement would not pay—they. But they have little political power at present, and are largely discredited because many of them eulogized or fought with the Nazis in Spain.

After the split of 1921, the other half of the Irish Republican Brotherhood adhered to their original principles. They fought the Irish Free State Government which was formed with the assistance of renegades from their own body, and were badly mauled by the armies of the large-capitalists and Friends-of-Britain who formed that government. Later, when the De Valera party, with the backing of the middlemen and peasants, ousted the large-scale employers, the Irish Republican Brotherhood fought that Government in turn. Their programme was an Irish Republic. Cosgrave's government was more like an oligarchy. But De Valera's, the

present Eire administration, was not much better, in their view. The Eire Government was adopting a policy of compromise, and accepting an indirect dictatorship from 'over the water'. They fought it. British readers may be amused to learn that the Irish Republican Brotherhood condemned De Valera as a tool of the British! The I.R.A. bombings, here and in Eire, expressed that condemnation.

There is a fallacy in such views, but it is far from obvious and by no means matter for jest—so far as the British people and the friends of Western solidarity are concerned. Practically all economic power in Eire rests in the hands of Big Business. They used to have political power as well, in the Cosgrave Government which preceded De Valera. Big business owes allegiance only to Leadenhall Street, London. When the I.R.A. men saw functionaries of British railways, steamship lines, breweries, tobacco firms, and the like being installed as the 'Irish' government, they had ample reason for rage. The Irish Free State was a flagrant 'plant'.

But to-day, when the political power has passed almost entirely to the small-men, naturally those who control the economic life of the country still have a powerful if indirect pull. They pull, always, towards the chimera and mirage, the outworn, anachronistic, dead-but-still-malodorous England of Chamberlain and pre-Chamberlain, of suicidal, money-grubbing and friendship for Hitler, the vanished business-men's England that nearly lost the war for a few millions of profit. Against them, always, pulls the I.R.A. It may be that one day the Western democracies will thank them. But it was inevitable that the antipathy of the Irish Republican Brotherhood for that reactionary 'tie-up' should have been directed at the devoted head of Eamonn De Valera. Economic threads pulling a puppet are almost invisible.

Thus, in all the towns and most of the rural districts, groups of men exist who are sworn to enmity of the present government 'because it is too near to England'. A terribly punitive espionage, under the Cosgrave government, produced the

natural caution. The secret societies are really secret again. The I.R.B. is strong and active. At present its activities (of which these comments are no condemnation) consist of I.R.A. propaganda among the peasants, based on the actions and utterances of the ranchers and their friends. As things stand at present, there is nothing else to do.

Another secret society, also with considerable power and with much greater backing, is an offshoot of Irish Fascism. Fantastically enough, it too adheres to its obsolete programme of fomenting political differences with a view to helping the British and Hitler! Only a couple of years ago, there was nothing fantastic in such an outlook. To-day the contradiction glares. But the Irish S.S. continue their work, exactly as if nothing had happened in Britain since the Norway campaign. Their propaganda consists of crude laudation of the Nazis and 'pro-British' jeers at the De Valera administration. Their methods vary from assault and mayhem to homicide. Their funds come almost entirely from the friends of big business in Eire. Which does not mean Berlin, by several hundred miles.

In the United States the Eire-Fascists have very little influence among the Irish, but at home they have a considerable following. Anyone acquainted with the growth of the Nazi movement in Germany will understand *that*. Impoverished younger sons, young small-business-men, squeezed out by competition, ambitious larger farmers, shrewd unemployed who prefer the wages of thuggery to legal doles—these form the bulk of the would-be Storm-troopers who somehow still confuse Nazism with the British people! (The mixture of phrases in their propaganda must be read to be believed.)

At present this particular secret society has a kind of comic-opera truce with the I.R.A., on the strength of the latter's anti-British record. Put plainly, it reads something after this fashion: the I.R.A. is attacking and waiting for a chance to smash De Valera. Good. It is also 'of course' operating

against Britain and helping the Nazis, those true friends of small minorities everywhere. Good. Therefore the good Storm-trooper (or Puce-shirt) can desist from his anti-I.R.A. activities for the time being, and mark time beside his former republican enemy. Gilbert and Sullivan never thought of anything like that, but it is the programme of a powerful secret organization in Eire to-day. British people who have been amazed and amused by the fraternization of certain alleged socialists and certain open Fascists, in mutual opposition to the war, will understand this glaring contradiction.

Soon, almost inevitably, the Eire fascists will find themselves confronting a combination of the De Valera Government plus I.R.A., plus peasantry. To quote another British Premier—God help them; they will get short shrift.

For the most part, the members of the various 'illegal' bodies, the I.R.A., the Blueshirts, the Irish Republican Brotherhood and so on, are quite sincere in their propaganda and their efforts. Some do really want to see a government of Fascist-minded British business men in Dublin, others desire to have a republic of all Ireland, and they strive towards their various ends, meaning what they say. Here and there a few have sold out, in the ordinary way of trade, to the Nazis, but that kind of thing happens in every country and they are not numerous. Nobody, for instance, would say the British Labour movement was a Nazi-friend, even if one or two people do voice with monotonous regularity strange tortured rationalizations to the effect that the British should stop fighting! The percentage of 'sell-outs' is even lower in Ireland. But most people 'know' that the I.R.A. is being financed by Hitler.

There is a Nazi mob, as has been seen, but it is not the I.R.A., and its money does not come from Hitler. The second-best guarantee that any individual attempting to swing the I.R.A. into being a tool of Nazism would lose his position—and other things—is that organization's own code. They will help anyone, or accept help from anyone, in the

furtherance of their programme to set up an Irish Republic. But they are by no means tyros in politics. They *mean* Irish Republic. Promises do not count. Goebbels has made less headway with the Republicans than with the unorganized workers and poor people. Much less.

The *best* guarantee, though, is the fact that Republican membership is some five times greater in the United States than in Eire! The Irish Republicans in America are at present largely preoccupied with the maintenance of the larger republic of which they are citizens, and of which they desire to remain citizens. It does not by any means follow that they have forgotten the smaller Ireland, or the Atlantic on whose edge it stands. Even as good Americans only, they could not and dare not do so. But they will not be wanting any nonsensical delays in the safeguarding of the salt-water approach to their front door.

Always Irish republicanism at home follows the lead of the organization in the States. This time it will be easier than ever before. Because the fluke or accident of Ireland's position in the sea makes it essential for the British and American governments to safeguard that keystone in the Atlantic bridge. Even the meanest and most elementary form of that guarantee resolves itself into something immediately and immeasurably superior to the Irish Republic towards which our people have struggled for so long.

The first opponents of that settlement will be, not the De Valera middlemen—they are all republicans, too, though 'moderate' and cautious—but the friends of Britain in the Cagoulard-like secret organizations. God help them.

There will be other opponents, but none that matter much, in a life-and-death struggle for the Atlantic. A few mean men, proved and open enemies of Britain but (again!) strangely numbered among her friends, will inevitably press for profit instead of settlements. But not they nor yet their friends can for even a little while withstand the combined pressure of desperate Britain and the Greater Ireland.

The Irish Empire

THROWN back on potatoes-and-little-else, as most of Ireland was in the first half of last century, the region nevertheless showed what used to be called signs of prosperity. The acreage under (small) tillage increased, exports (of agricultural produce) were on the up-grade, the population grew.

Potatoes are a good crop, yielding large returns even under primitive hand-cultivation. Nobody starved. The potato spread everywhere. Peasants were fairly satisfied, and raised large families. Political agitation, except for a purely constitutional movement for Catholic Emancipation, which was successful, hardly existed for close on a generation.

Then the potato crop failed and in a few weeks millions of people were swept down into hunger, disease, and death.

Liam O'Flaherty's superb novel, *Famine*, will be familiar to many readers in America and Britain. Every major passage of drama in the work is a documented fact. Here it is best to be merely mathematical. Four million people rotted or died or fled. There was a wailing trail of misery on the way to the ports of those who might manage to flee westward, to the new land where there was food.

“ Oh, the praties they were small,
Over here, over here ;
The praties they were small
Over here.

The crudely realistic lamentations of the Famine Song went with the starving processions that tramped from Westmeath and Louth into Dublin, from Wexford and Carlow over to Waterford Harbour, from Limerick and Tipperary across to Cork, in search of ships America-bound.

"The praties they were small,
And we dug before the fall,
And we ate them—skins and all,
Over here."

Remember that it was in the days when there was little land-transport, and when sailing-ships fetched America in five or six weeks, with luck. There was no catering for emigrants, either. Water only was supplied, in most cases. Some of the emigrants took a few potatoes, skins and all. Some took only skins. They brought the memory of that trek with them to the States. Four generations later, in the minds of millions who have never seen Ireland, it is still there.

At about the same time, a migration to the Antipodes commenced. But it was somewhat different, although similarly conditioned. (The strange tricks, the strange tricks that a dry-as-dust economic fact will be playing. A tuber-crop failed, and ninety-three years later kings smiled for a man with a Dalcassian physiognomy. Hunger became protest and the word became steel, wherefore after almost a century an Antipodean sergeant in an Eastern desert whoops his battle-mad mates ahead with the boo-cry of the mountain Irish. The strange tricks.)

Most of the emigrants from Ireland to Australia, at about that time, had their passage-money paid by the British Government. The persistence of Australian names like Kelly, Dwan, Donoughoe, Burke, Delaney, Rowan, Maher, Lenehan, and the like, puzzles many people at first. (Almost every second person in Southern Australia seems to be called Delaney.) A little comparative history is profoundly interesting, even for the non-Irish. For the Irish it provides matter for song. Much song, because the Irish who went to Australia were all convicts.

There were very many; numbers of the Irish who did not go to America made armed protest against the simple economic fact of the potato-failure. They brought and made

emigrant-songs, too, and provided others of their own, before long. 'Jack O'Donoughoe' is still sung in every town in Australia—and every town in Ireland. Donoughoe was a convict mutineer.

America in 1849 was a tough country, big-handed, generous, hard, yielding millions or death, miraculous superabundance or belly-biting hunger, legendary friendship or cold lead. Those who lived through the days of the Rush to California, the trek of the prairie-schooners, the Cape-Horn route to San Francisco and the beginning of the railroads, had to be steel-hard in courage and bulky of muscle. The Irish were; only the best of them ever reached the Irish ports; only the best of the best survived the double death of the emigrant ships. Bull-whacking on the Salt Lake Trail, lumbering in Michigan, ripping a way for the railroads was *easy*, after the praties that were small.

The Irish grew, and prospered, and grew again, laughed and cursed and fought and slaved themselves deep into the social structure of the United States, and prospered again. There was no following famine that time. But they never forgot the first one.

It is not memory, or not *merely* memory, that swings great masses of people into a reaction automatic as the wheeling of a bird-flock. The people do not say, 'Ah, we recall so-and-so. Therefore we will do this thing.' It is deeper than that. A potent mass-experience leaves to the survivors and their descendants a nerve-heritage independent of simple recollection. There is nothing 'national' about it, but the thing is only labelled when observed in people from the same country.

You will be talking to a Jew, a quiet ordinary average chap. Not a deeply religious Jew, nor orthodox, nor a saintly man. Just a decent young fellow with a job or a business, a home and kids, hopes and work and worries like everyone. Then casually or in reference to something trivial, you use one of the words that labels one of the experiences of people he has never seen and of whom he knows little, in lands of which he

has scarcely heard. In a second you change him, that ordinary unimaginative man, into someone consumed by fear and pity and anxiety, for still others he has never known, regarding dangers he himself will never expect to know.

That is not tradition, it is neurosis. A great artist or writer sometimes canalizes his neurosis into fear or hope for millions bearing no national label at all. But mostly men act thus neurotically when stimulated by key-thoughts connected with the people they call their own.

Say 'manacle' to a negro, 'pogrom' to a Jew, 'famine' to an Irishman. Even if he be wealthy and secure, you make him in a second a hunted thing, pain-keen in concern for the other hunted, or—the automatic part—for those not hunted at all. The fear is dug in too deeply, and three or four generations are not enough to get rid of it. Especially in our kind of world.

Jack London told a story of a man who had starved in the forests of the Klondyke. Rescued, those on the ship watched in amazement his phenomenal increase in stoutness. The unnatural bulk was only explained at the landing, when they found thousands of crusts hidden in his clothes. (Convicts everywhere do much the same thing, after a long spell of starvation.)

The reaction of the American-Irish, for generations after the famine, was of that nature. Well-fed, boisterously happy, tough till it hurt—others, prosperous beyond their wildest dreams, they forgot the famine swiftly. But like automata they showered money into Ireland. It is almost incredible, but it is a fact, that the postal authorities had to make special arrangements to deal with the 'Irish Registered Mail'. Jack London's crusts.

It is a commonplace that where a man gives money gratuitously he pledges himself and his interest too. For fifty years the chief import of Ireland was registered letters—one of the most fantastic economic contradictions ever recorded. Of nine million Irish, before the famine, three million earning

an average of fourpence-a-day supported all the rest. Five million vanished, in, because of, or after the 'Big Hunger'. The income of the others quintupled, and the difference between the sums came from America. This is what non-Irish commentators generally have in mind when they say the Irish are 'nationally' generous, patriotic, and devoted to their families.

By 1866 there was a younger generation of Irish-Americans coming along. The stories, around those firesides in America, from parents still of the native stock, about the hardships of peasant or worker life at home, and the wickedness of the English and the ranchers, and above all of the Hunger and the terrible crossing! The young fellows sent money, too, to the relatives they had never seen. In a little while they sent other things, for trouble was coming up again, at home.

There is no need to touch upon any detail of what happened in Ireland at about that time. Just trouble—ranchers and landless men, punitive land-rents, something that used to be called, frankly in those days, 'coercion.' The Irish Republican Brotherhood, most of whose earlier men had gone to Van Diemen's Land or Bermuda as convicts, was resuscitated in the States. It spread swiftly, and the Fenians made their armed protest, lost, went to jail or gallows, as had happened before. Their propaganda value, dead or prisoned, was high in the States. From those days the Irish Republican Brotherhood and several similar organizations widened and extended their influence, right up to the present day.

The simplest way to describe the American influence upon the Irish at home is to call it inverted nostalgia. British people in Canada or India, say, think much of 'home', often centre their thoughts on metropolitan happenings, snatch at chances for leave, return when opportunity offers and settle down in the country of their birth. The Irish did almost the exact opposite, which is amusing when one remembers their reputation for love of native land. The 'Yank', or returned

American, automatically owned the village. Young men who had not been in the States were looked upon as sissified fledglings. It even reached the stage at which people *pretended* to have been in the States, for a quiet life. Sincere imitation could go no farther.¹

Back in the States the Irish changed, much and swiftly. Bull-whacker, miner, policeman, lumberjack, railroader, bartender—that was the Irishman until about 1869. In the big opening-up of the country that followed the westward spread of the railroads after 1869, the Irish changed, feeling more at home and having a little more security. Share-cropper, miner, clergyman, police-captain, lumberjack, saloon-owner, ward-politician—any or most of those was more likely to have a name like Donovan or Leahy than not. Then came the swift industrialization and the teeming rush of the factory towns, and Tammany Hall, and fortunes in saloons and contracting. Miner, police-chief, clergyman, saloon-owner, state politician, contractor, industrial drummer, newspaperman, judge, increasingly about the turn of the century one expected to find Irish names and faces in those occupations. Only miner and clergyman (R.C., of course) would seem to be ‘nationally justified’.

The intercourse between Ireland and the States was greater than ever. Steamship companies fought for the prize of the Irish trade. (In people, not in goods.) Lough Swilly and Cobh were ports for American lines. Every tiny pub in a mountain hamlet had its *Boston Globe* and its *Herald*, besides the inevitable multichrome posters of the shipping companies offering cheap fares either way. Indeed, at one time you could go from Waterford to Boston, over three thousand miles, for thirty shillings. In 1912, when the

¹ It is interesting that much of the American slang now being generally used in England and elsewhere, as a result of the Hollywood influence, should have been current in Irish villages thirty or forty years ago. ‘Ses you’ was Irish colloquial currency when I was a boy. ‘Oh, yeah?’ accompanied a lift of the eyebrows in a Dublin pub about 1910. Everyone in bog-villages guessed and reckoned as far back as people can remember.

'Curragh Mutiny'¹ took place, there was a growl from end to end of the United States which *ought to have been* heard in London, but unfortunately was not. The 1912 files of even the least pro-Irish newspapers in the States make very interesting reading.

Almost immediately after the Loyalist gun-running and the Curragh mutiny there was an Irish gun-running, followed by bloodshed. The Irish Republican Brotherhood, working with very great secrecy, organized the movement which was then called Sinn Fein and later the Irish Republic. Most of the money and the best of the propaganda came from the States. When in 1916 the rebellion boiled over, the same held good. But it was not until the years after 1919, in the struggle against the Black-and-Tans, that the full weight of Irish-American money and power was felt. Two hundred million dollars, collected openly (much of it by Eamon De Valera, the present Eire President) went into the fight against the British. The comings and goings, between Galway and New York, at a time when of course no rebel leader was allowed to be free, let alone take passage on a ship, make a vastly dramatic story. All over the United States people in every walk of life from Senator to garbage-man were—not remembering but just reacting to the Big Hunger.

Since 1922 the Republican organizations in America have been largely quiescent. They are extremely well organized and very numerous, besides having terrific political 'pull', something for which the Irish are almost as notorious as Right People anywhere. (Consider the names in American diplomacy, administration, state politics, the newspaper world, as an example of what a really good Big Hunger will do for a people!) Lately they have been turning anti-Nazi

¹ The Curragh Mutiny was an incident which occurred at the time the Belfast loyalists had shown their loyalty by procuring German guns to start a rebellion. The officer in charge of the British troops at the Curragh, in Kildare, gave certain orders. Certain officers refused. 'Ulster will fight and Ulster will be Right' acquired a sinister significance thereafter.

in a preoccupied fashion, but it would be a naïve ignorance of psychology, let alone economics, to suppose that pre-occupation implied forgetfulness of Ireland at home. *Tout au contraire.*

Quietly, quickly, without one wag of a flag or bang of a big drum, the far-seeing observers at the head of the Democratic Party made their reports about Eire. Quietly and without any dramatic nonsense Roosevelt sent the American food-ships to Eire last May. The first ships to brush aside with their prows the paper-waves of the Neutrality Act, be it noted. The ships that directly and in dignified fashion contravened everything the ranchers' friends had hoped for, be it noted. The intentions of the British Government regarding Eire at that time are not known. The desires of 'We' stood out like a second ace of hearts in a poker hand. 'We' wanted Eire starved into recalcitrance. The Democratic Party in America did not. In many districts the Irish *are* the Democratic Party. The ships were sent. Wisha, if that's not a wispeen o' straw sure I never saw a tempest, is roughly the comment of Tipperary on the event.

There is a joke in Galway, about a hotel on the sea front, facing the Atlantic. A notice advertised it as 'To let. Apply opposite.' The strange reader looked 'opposite' and saw only the ocean. The owner lived in New York. They say New York is a suburb of Galway—'but a little bit westerly,' and that Boston, Massachusetts, is the biggest city in Ireland.

Things like that, better than argument or statistics, point to the ties between peoples. Would it be an accident, maybe, that a multi-millionaire pays Irish artists to do cartoon-strips for papers selling many millions, in which the *average* middle-class citizen (say Strube's 'Little Man' in the *Daily Express*, or Colonel Up and Mr. Down) is given an unmistakably Irish phiz and Irish-American friends. Or perhaps the millionaire is a bad business man? At any rate that is the kind of nation a few dozen people of the 'We' type are blindly attempting to oppose, contrary to the

interests and needs of the British Government. If the Irish-Americans are anti-Nazi—what are 'We'?

The links with Australia are more emotional, being mainly religious and patriotic, which the American ties are not. Everyone knows the Aussie's joke against himself—his equivalent of the *Mayflower* story.¹ But you will not find many people claiming that their families were amongst the first settlers, nevertheless. Except the Irish. They boast about their emigration, and of course rightly, since to have been transported for life by the British about 1840-ish, from Ireland, was practically a certificate of great moral and physical courage. Anyone who has read John Mitchel's *Jail Journal* will recognize the reasons for the pride.

The type-reactions of the Irish-Australian in khaki are very naïve. He is quite likely to walk up to any London journalist with an Irish name, and start to talk about Easter Week, 1916, besides showing a rosary round his neck. If tight, he will probably sing one or two of the rebel songs of 1921. The Irish in the States do not behave in that way. But then neither do the Irish in the States (yet) fight on the British side with that terrific handicraft concentration of the Australians.

It is a curious contradiction, and interesting nowadays as it was interesting in 1918, when the two groups of 'Irish Exiles' (neither of whom had ever seen Ireland, generally speaking!) got together. Perhaps it is best summed up statistically. The Irish Republican Brotherhood has not a large membership in Australia. But there is a very large number of people with Irish names, relatives 'at home', a

¹ Once, in an English jail, I was pulling an Australian convict's leg. A real Jeff Peters person, he was a conman first and last, *but* became objuratory when I insinuated that it ran in the family, since he belonged to an old Australian family! He indignantly denied that he was a descendant of convicts, until I pretended to be convinced, and accepted the alternative that his forebears had been transportation-warders. With that choice, he picked the hulks as his ancestral home at once. An Irish-Australian would have announced it in the first minute.

traditional pride in a rebellious ancestry—and an automatic inclination to fight for Australia, or (as usually happens) for Britain.

No reader would be saying, 'Good; the Irish Aussies are all safe supporters, then. No need to . . .' Because only a very mean man thinks that way and generally he thinks wrong. It is a fact though that the Irish-Australians can be equated with the mass of the ordinary, quiet, unorganized Irish in Ireland. Who also fight epically, on occasion, and often in the British Army.

That is the Irish Empire. Two groups of people, one numbering many millions, with wealth and influence and a desire to aid Britain for their own sake; the other smaller, relatively even wealthier, physically superb and with a tradition of 'dropping in to lend a hand over there' which they have borrowed from their countrymen of British descent. Both 'remembering', across three generations, the small insignificant country on the Atlantic's edge. It is a big empire and a strange. There was a time when it was matter for interest and awe but little else, what of its size and strange orientation.

But the world is getting smaller, and some of the things advanced thinkers have been saying for years, unheeded, are now the commonplaces of daily conversation. 'If one poor blackman be crushed to death on a South Sea island by a million-greedy soap company, then you and I in our daily lives cannot escape the consequences.'

Time was when nations 'minded their own business'; and no one cared who voted what, nor where, except in his 'own' land. Now we are seeing, slowly, that there is only one world and that anybody's business is everybody's. Victorian statesmen would have thought it ludicrous that Britons should wait with eagerness and anxiety the result of an election in a country thousands of miles away. Or that millions of Irish, in the vast Democratic Party where they bulk so big, should vote in effect for the swift succour of the 'ancient enemy'.

Or that we in London should openly disclose our conviction that Democratic America ranks almost equal with the Royal Navy as a British defence. The Victorian would have called us mad; it is only getting sane that we are.

The largest solidly organized voting group in the States is the Irish. They practically *built* the Democratic Party, in the exuberance of wielding the new potent weapon of the vote. They are terrific—nobody in Britain needs telling about that nowadays. In Australia the Irish-descended make no 'nationalistic' showing. They go in the army, and fight, when there is a war, for the British, without hesitation or thought, while they boast of their rebel ancestry—and sing in Trafalgar Square the Irish Republican songs of 1920.

That is the Irish Empire, again. It is an original, *not* to say unique and *very* Irish way to build an empire. But it is there. Some *rats* would antagonize it to-day for their own ends. Some noble-minded gentlemen accidentally express their own individual dislikes in the name of the British people. (Has *anyone* forgotten the ghastly business in which one high-minded altruistic gentleman, a known former backer of Nazism, printed a deadly insult to the Americans in what was supposed to be a national work, and nearly got away with it?) Some rats in any country would do that kind of thing, too, if they were allowed. But indeed you cannot kick a man's dog, even, and then ask him to lend you a fiver. Let alone kicking his old granny and his baby and the secret toy house where he keeps his dreams.

From Blacksod or Galway, America is the next stop. The dream-house where the millions of the democratic American-Irish live in spirit is nearer by vital days to the American coast than any British base. It should be used, for them and for us, now. Whoever says nay.

The Irish Empire is the friend of Britain and the enemy of Nazism at present. That is a bad thing, for Hitler and for some others. Hitler is in good hands—and sure the others only want a little watching.

Ulster will be Right

PERSONS closely interested in profit generally cease to be interested in anything else. This is not an accusation but a statement of fact. In peacetime—or in little ‘ordinary’ wars—we pretend not to know this. Even in a large war we pretend that the sometimes-stringent laws against trading with the enemy are all directed at alien firms! The fact is that profit-chasing, carried to its natural extreme, transcends not only religion and patriotism and logic, but also sometimes profit. The man is not responsible; the pennies get away from him and go chasing accumulated farthings here, there, and everywhere. If the farthings come from the sale of petrol, say, to his country’s enemies, generally he is very sorry about it, afterwards. Some time afterwards.

There was a time when that kind of fiction, painful and undignified as it was, survived by sheer mass-suggestion. Even in wars, profit came first. It came before munitions or food, in many countries, for many years. It came a long way before statesmanship or culture or humanity. This is not one of those wars. Not now. The profit-preconception gave us Munich, and Norway, and Dunkirk. It will not be giving us any more such. Nowadays the British are attempting to implement their decision that if profit wants to commit suicide it *can*, but that it is not getting away with murder.

So there will not this time (one is certain) be any mine-owners restricting coal production because the return is greater that way. Nor shipowners considering the freight-rates first and the feeding of Britain second. Nor factory proprietors ‘sticking out’ for financial *bonnes bouches* before getting on with the job. Recent legislation has made it possible to be rid at one sweep of all those criminal and frightening misfits. That legislation will be pressed into

practice, sooner or later. It had better be sooner. If we wait to be polite, the Nazis will not.

Reference has been made earlier to the Cromwellian Plantations in Ireland. What happened was that large numbers of the Irish were driven off their land, and hunted away into a western province, while Cromwellian soldiers and backers were 'planted' on the vacated estates. (Mussolini's technique in Abyssinia was the same, but it did not work, being a few hundred years out of date.)

Most of the descendants of those 'planters' are now working people. A few, a very few of the descendants, with their business associates, are Big Business men in the north of Ireland. They are, demonstrably, preoccupied with profits to the point of neurosis. Like all such people, they hold much capital. But the major item in the list of their capital is intangible. They draw millions per year in interest on a fiction. Now, that is shrewd finance with a vengeance.

The fiction is that the British Empire would *perish* overnight if a handful of business men at the top end of Ireland were to withdraw their august approval of the same. Any reader who thinks the statement exaggerated or merely meant to be funny must consult the files of *The Times* and the Belfast papers and read the speeches of the northern leaders. The only person in Britain who has ever remotely approached their grotesquely comical divorce from logic is—Billy Bennet.

But there is nothing comical about the returns. The profits are there, tangible enough. Some of them are paid by the British people too. There is also the dignity and self-satisfaction of being worthy props of a glorious empire. The *other* descendants of the planters get that.

At one time there was a good deal of bad blood—some of it spilt—between the northern and southern sections of the populace. In earlier days it was fairly easy to whip up sectional hatreds. But lately no one has taken a great deal of notice. The profit-gentlemen were *there*. They looked like staying there, with the chivalrous and generous support of a

few friends in Britain, for a few years more. Meanwhile, the De Valera politicians nibbled and clipped at the 1921 Treaty, always edging their way nearer to a position in which the flow of capital from north to south Ireland would complete the reintegration of the country. The politics could wait.

De Valera and his party came to power with the avowed intention of chipping away Mr. Lloyd George's frontier. It is amusing and significant that the name of the place was changed from the Irish Free State to Eire. The latter word, translated means Ireland. But of late the De Valera party have not had to spend much energy on planning or executing schemes for ending the Lloyd George partition. The working people themselves were beginning to get a little bored by receiving the glory of being British Citizens as their reward every time, while somehow the millions went to the same few people who made the laws and owned the factories. It was getting more and more difficult to whoop them up—and to hold them down. Quite one-third of them were devaleraites or Irish Republicans anyway. The fairy-tale sellers were on the down grade. The war gave them a new lease of life.

The De Valera Party's wretched fiddling little programme for the enticement-of-capital never got any support from the Irish Republican Brotherhood or the I.R.A. In fact, the chief difference between the two groups has been in their attitudes regarding 'The Border'. In any case it does not matter now. With the war, Belfast and the neighbouring towns went on war-work. The unemployment problems disappeared. Wage-questions were satisfactorily postponed or dealt with. Big Business sat back and sighed in relief. The border was safe for the duration.

Nowadays the average person in Britain thinks of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as a political entity (rather curiously-shaped, true) which somehow sprang miraculously into existence about the year dot. Few people know the history of 'The Border', recent as it is. That is good journalism, indeed, for the thing is only about nineteen years old.

Spain and Northern Mexico; France and Northern Canada; Italy and Northern Abyssinia; Holland and Northern New York; Portugal and Northern Brazil—any of these terms will strike a reader as insolent and anachronistic. Yet in each pair the first country named did at one time 'take over' the second. To the Irish, there is no difference in kind between those terms and the name 'Great Britain and Northern Ireland'. Yet, unless the British were to acknowledge brute force, rapacity and an out-of-date preoccupation with the taking-over of places as being their major motives for retaining the division, they would perforce have to abolish it in order to justify themselves around the world. Or is there a difference?

Spain did not keep Northern Mexico because Spain was not strong enough to hold it. Holland did not keep New York for the same reason. Mussolini—there is no need to go on. Yet one *cannot* go around saying that Britain holds down part of Ireland just because Britain has a larger army and more navy-ships! It is not done, except by the Japanese, and even they have to pretend a bit.

Precisely there is the place for the fiction which pays a six-figure interest to certain persons who own factories and make laws in and near Belfast. The British did it because the Irish wanted them to, insisted in fact. *There* are the speeches and news-articles to prove it. Some of the populace wanted to be protected from the others—just like the Sudetan Germans—and Britain kindly consented, yielding to the pressure and undertaking solemn obligations.

There is the story, flimsier than the patter of a three-card man, round which Mr. Lloyd George built his Treaty twenty years ago. It is a mean sordid huckstering little story, but it hardly merits mention to-day. The Border is abolishing itself, and the whole wretched business will be forgotten in another twenty years, except as an example of pre-war legislation. Unless Britain comes into the fiction-market *again*, and attempts to sell that same story to the Americans.

But that is very unlikely, and it need not have been mentioned at all except for one very curious incident.

'What we want,' he said, using the regal and editorial pronoun as to the manner born, 'is a lot of articles—good solid articles with a punch to them—explaining that we must pile our tanks and mechanized units along the Border, ready to jump in and . . .'

'Are you at the War Office?' inquired his interlocutor. 'You shouldn't talk about projected troop movements, you know. Even if you *are*.'

'No, no,' he explained hurriedly. 'I'm—er—I've just studied this problem. Now, what we want. . . ' He went on to use the names of everyone in authority except the King and Montagu Norman, using them in an airy manner with many nods of confident familiarity. It was obvious that he was no pathological liar, and that he really did know the people, so that his companion frowned a little and became terse. 'I won't write the articles,' he conceded. 'You chaps can do that better than I. You have the idea, now? Every mechanized . . .'

'*Please* don't talk about troops and war materials,' cut in the other roughly. 'Unless you have a War Office credential on you, and want to give me an interview. What *we* want to know,'—perhaps the grin with the pronoun was unpardonable—'is who you're representing.'

'Oh.' Pained surprise and the rudeness of well-bred curiosity accompanied the monosyllable and the stare. 'I had been led to believe . . . Are you . . . We thought you were *all right*. Waiter—bill, please. G'day. G'day.'

If that halfwit has any friends, as seems likely, and if they have sufficient influence even to attempt to have their own way, this country will be committed, now in the year of the reorganization, to the attempted sale of a puerile fiction—to the Americans of all people. That is, to a nation with many millions who know all about it. It would be easier to sell a glass fragment to a diamond buyer.

Here is the story. It would be extremely unwise of any reader to accept it, unless everything stated as a fact is checked by British references. One does not have to be a very brilliant peasant writer to put such a case plausibly, because there is a great deal of emotional dramatic pull with it, which makes it easy for anyone with a little knowledge of blarney-cum-logic to enlist a reader's sympathies and jump him past criticism.

But there is no time for that kind of rubbish now. When the fullness or emptiness of our stomachs and the efficiency or otherwise of our ¹ weapons depends in large part upon what is done about Ireland *this year*, there is no room for tricks of style or peasant plausibility. It is a dirty story, in places, but the last chapter can make up for all.

Ulster was and is one of the richest provinces of Ireland. Formerly because of its fine productive soil, afterwards because of the concentration of industry combined with this. Once, after the Irish had lost a war, the English drove them out from Ulster and took their land. It is a long time ago and happened in a period when '*vae victis*' was a golden rule in post-war matters. That part of the story does not count for much now—except to a few middle-class politicians trying to make a good bargain on emotional grounds. It is called the Plantation, and the people who moved in are called the 'Planters', in the English history-books.

Those who were turfed out were driven (that is the correct verb) on to the stony and sterile land of Connaught, a western province. Perhaps it is unnecessary to mention that some of the most brilliant writers and fighters in Ireland came out of Connaught now. The dispossession, long ago, started their republicanism for them. One has only to think of names like O'Flaherty, McDonagh, O'Malley. (It would be an interesting labour for a celestial actuary to work out whether Liam O'Flaherty, say, owes more for his rebel spirit and brilliant peasant writings to the Planters of long

¹ When I write 'our' I am counting myself as a citizen of Fleet Street.
—J. P.

ago or their descendants to him for his ancestral acres! But that is about as far as interest need go nowadays.)

Gradually the mass of the planter-people themselves became impoverished. There *had* to be labour, for the ever-increasing estates of the lucky few—and the Irish were gone ‘to hell or Connaught’. So in a surprisingly short time Ulster was populated by a few very wealthy men and a large number of ordinary working people indistinguishable from the Irish their fathers had displaced. Indistinguishable, that is, except in two ways. They differed in faith, for the most part, and they were subjected to grave religious persecution.

About at the beginning of the nineteenth century, for instance, these unfortunate Ulster-Irish came under the merciless lash of the regnant and powerful Catholic Church. Every scrap of freedom was denied them; they could not worship God in their own way without walking in fear and terror of the Papacy and its armed adherents. Even their children were tormented and attacked, and their pastors prayed in fear of the jail or worse. Inevitably, they drew closer together, and became segregated, in bonds of religion and fear, from the Irish who had so nearly assimilated them. The maximum of cleavage was reached about the middle of the nineteenth century, when the industrialization of the province was making strides.¹

¹ Those readers who have read that last paragraph without registering protest against its terrible inaccuracy are invited to memorize it—as a check upon the speeches and writings of Ulster ‘loyalists’. The passage was written thus to demonstrate how little is known in Britain of even recent Irish history. At the time mentioned, a Catholic had no legal rights whatever, let alone being in a position to persecute anyone. A Catholic priest was, automatically, a felon, believe it or not. An adherent of the R.C. Church *could not* legally own a valuable horse or house. The charges of persecution are strongly reminiscent of Hitler’s charges of encirclement. Consult Hansard, and British Parliamentary Records. The Catholic Emancipation Act did not come in force until years later, in Queen Victoria’s time. But like the encirclement stories the Catholic persecution myths served their purpose. Thereby the suzerainty of Ulster passed into the hands of a few large employers, who still retain it, with the help of the persecuted non-Catholics. The author is an opponent of the Catholic Church (which pays him the compliment of banning all his books), but only a crook or an imbecile would tolerate such

Most Irish Republican commentators, all De Valera's spokesmen, all Ulster loyalists, the majority of English writers, tend to drift away into emotionalism or cheap sentiment in relating the next chapter of the history. Only a few economists, even those with a socialistic turn, have dealt with and dismissed the chapter in the few words it deserves. It was the period of the Industrialization of Britain, that is all.

Britain made things, and was first in that field. Other peoples bought them. Ireland was one of the other peoples. Only rank madness, or an altruistic vision then and now indistinguishable therefrom, would have dreamt of setting up a *rival* industrialism in the neighbouring island! Even Shelley, a contemporary and sympathetic observer, never thought of such a fantastic solution as that! Of course Ireland was to be agricultural. The tough individualistic pioneers of British industry were not in business for their health. Ireland was a potential competitor. Naturally, inevitably, legally, rightly according to the code of the time, Ireland was kept out. Things like that happen. Economic history is full of them.

There were exceptions. A few people got in on the ground floor. Especially when Wolff, a German, and Harland, another German setting up in Belfast, showed results in ship-building at a time when ships were becoming important to British trade. Especially also when it was shown that the linen industry did not at all compete with Bradford or Lancashire, and that there was good cheap labour, what of the religious segregation. Most certainly there were exceptions because of something called 'being right.'

Being Right involves a very human and often laudable weakness. (John Galsworthy wrote one of his best plays round the idea, 'Loyalties'.) It means that if certain persons are not your personal friends, you may still know that they

a crude falsification of history. Among the friends of the Ulster industrialists there do not seem to be many imbeciles.

are good people to know, and be aware that they are automatically entitled to the concessions of friendship. It would be futile to pretend that a person with a name like, say, Edward Carson would meet the same genial response from a Boston police-captain as one with a name like, say, James Phelan! Being Right, in Britain during about the last hundred and fifty years has had military, political, and business concomitants. Twenty-five, twenty-five, fifty, is roughly the relative percentage of influence.

Now, it was no fault of the few wealthy people in the north of Ireland that their ancestors had been 'planted'. Certainly it would have been contrary to human nature to penalize them. Although exiles, they and their families had friends, and they were known to be right. *Et voila*—Ulster.

Not Northern Ireland—that was decades away in the future. Industrial Ulster, *not* condemned to an agricultural future as a possible competitor, and maintaining its segregation, carefully, because of the religious difference between some of the northern people and some of the southern people. Loyal Ulster (except, of course, when a British Government looked like undoing earlier mistakes, when the loyalists promptly bought rifles from Germany and started to insurrect). Protestant Ulster, except for the 33 per cent Roman Catholics and the large non-professing fraction of the Socialists. Ulster one and indivisible.

So far there is nothing very terrible, certainly nothing strange or unexpected in the story, although many Irish orators on either side, get considerably excited when discussing it. Britain became a manufacturing power, kept out competition, made a few exceptions in favour of people known to Be Right, helped them to retain their concessions intact. What would the Dublin capitalists have done about Cumberland and Durham if the roles had been reversed?

Four fairly typical reactions to the events narrated above may be noted. An Irish Parliamentary Party propagandist of the old school would have foamed at the mouth for three

hours while speaking of them. Almost any commentator in London would say, 'Little bit of wangling. Not bad, eh?' A moderately educated Irish peasant might state the facts as given. Practically anyone in the United States would remark, 'Good business men, those old-timers, yeah?' If it had not been necessary to remove two or three elementary misconceptions, one peasant at least would have accepted the American summing-up as finally satisfactory.

Thus it was, until Munich. After Munich it became dangerous. After Dunkirk it reached the stage of being a murderous threat to British and—which is (perhaps pardonably in the present instance) more important—American survival. Because those old chaps who cashed in on a flimsy fiction as part of a very ordinary wangle, a century ago and more, left descendants with no greater originality than to attempt cashing in on the same fiction, even to the detriment of the Western peoples. That will not do. No matter how Right people may be, there are limits to friendship.

Already, in 1912, there was a foreshadowing of what is happening now. In that year a British Government, mainly in response to the proddings of an energetic young man named Winston Churchill, decided that since there might be a war with Germany it would be a pretty good idea to settle up with the Irish and make all *that* side safe. The Belfast industrialists had always been famous for their loyalty to Britain, as they are now. The Government passed a law removing most of the silly old abuses. The loyalists immediately bought guns from Germany and raised a rebel army.

They received gold and honours for the stab in the back. They were still ALL right, and still had friends. See Burke's *Peerage*, *Who's Who*, and *The Times*. *Vide* also, as a *present-day pointer*, the careers of Lord Birkenhead, Lord Carson, Lord Craigavon, and many others. It would be well at the same time to look up the file which records the fact that a presumptuous young British politician was run out of town

in Ulster, for 'coming interfering with Ulster's rights': because after the double debacle of Norway and Dunkirk, in 1940, he replaced the poor old Nazi-appeaser and his name is Winston Churchill. That was a fair indication of the possible future and it would be suicidal to ignore it to-day.

Let us be done with the doubtful dignity of professional punctilio. Let us end this business of wasting words in talking of 'the present author'. Will you listen to the peasant, who cares for neither side in an industrial squabble, you readers who live west of Calais, even if you live as far west as Tomsk? To-day, when Yankee ships with crews from Dublin and Cork are on the Atlantic, with that most dangerous of all munitions, food, it will not do to be talking the nice little lies people used to sell in the drawing-rooms of London. Nor when American ships are cleaning the Western Ocean, in order that people like we and they may live, it is even moderately decent to tell them lies about loyalty.

Because a Yankee ship, limping past Blacksod or Lough Swilly to-day, passing its own old bases of the last anti-submarine war, would be doing so in order that the friends of the 1912 loyalists should have their way about shillings and pounds of profit. That is worse than foolishness—it is bloody murder. Have ye not sense enough to see that the world in which such things belonged is gone? And that those who grab at the profit will not get it anyway, any more than the friends of Quisling did.

Maybe it sounds as if the hard-boiled peasant with a modern outlook had gone all sentimental and ancient-Irish for a moment. Let us see. Either it is a good thing to try and squeeze Eire into the war and into acquiescence in British defence measures or it is a suicidal mistake. Anyone who knows Irish history would say it was a blunder. But many Western statesmen do not know any Irish history, naturally enough. So that it might have been decided to work a small squeeze upon the Irish. To bring them to reason, as it were, after they had found their rations being reduced as a result of

their recalcitrance. It might have been considered practical politics, by some.

Certainly no one professing to be a hard-boiled peasant could object. Most certainly the ranchers, and the friends of the ranchers, and the industrialist kings of the north, and their friends, and the gentlemen who say 'we' would not object. It might be tried, and it might work. A lot of stuff plugged in the national press of Britain only a few weeks ago (he must have found someone more amenable!) led up to something of the kind. Things like that happen in wars, and since the survival of the Western peoples is Jim Phelan's main concern, no protest is registered here.

But in the name of elementary logic, what sense is there in squeezing the Eire-people with one arm of the West, and feeding them at risk and distance, from the other? That would be plain folly, worse than the giving of gold and ennoblement for disloyalty. It would be something worse—it would be a failure to realize, or to care about, the problem of Britain's survival as a part of the democratic West. Worst of all, it would be an ignorant and insolent misappraisal of the Irish Empire, of the American Democratic Party, of the orientation of President Roosevelt, who dispatched those first ships to Eire, with food and the American flag and Irish crews.

.Roosevelt and those behind him want the Irish fed. Certain persons who can apparently find complaisant journalists want the Irish squeezed. As a very narrow-minded selfish man, booked for the firing-squad or the jail if ever the Nazis reach Fleet Street, London, Jim Phelan wants the Irish fed also.

He wants other things, and he will get them, 'We' notwithstanding. He wants the Irish army, that 'fine bunch of scrappers', lined up with the West, swiftly and efficiently, with the issues about defence and survival finally clarified and no rubbishy insolent nonsense about being compelled to volunteer as part of the glorious empire. He wants an Irish

Republican legion, with their old proven tactics of the flying column and the ambush—that would have held the Channel Ports in 1940 if the British had known how to use them as well as the Nazis—turned loose with modern equipment to rip the guts out of the Panzers, confident that they are not being used as tools or fooled into defending 'We'. He wants the Yankee ships to have the bases they used before, up at Lough Swilly and down at Cobh Harbour,¹ for use if they happen to get hurt while keeping the Atlantic clean. He wants those naval harbours used by the British or the French or the Dutch or any ships that are keeping away the attack on the West of which Ireland is an integral and important part.

Six or seven extremely wealthy men, in the north part of Ireland, do not want anything like that. A few dozen anachronisms in London and Dublin, still confusing Nazism with Britain and ignoring(!) America, do not want anything like that. They want, and are striving for to-day while I write, trouble between the Irish and the English on the Borders of Northern Ireland. They want a land-war between the peasants and the De Valera government, which might lead to a debacle and a confusing of the major issues. They want, and have striven for months to attain, to have the Irish squeezed, starved, bullied, or taunted into stubborn recalcitrance, as an excuse for a return to 'firmness'. Frantically and in pathetic ignorance they want to misrepresent the Irish in America and the Americans in Britain.

Because if any or all of the things this peasant and his readers want should materialize, six or seven people known to be All Right will lose¹ as much as a million. Perhaps more. Which would never do. Wherefore, six hours after Franklin Roosevelt had announced his programme of food-ships for Eire, last May, three national newspapers in Britain published fantastic misrepresentations or insolent distortions of that

¹ Cobh, Blacksod, Buncrana, and Castletown Bere were American naval bases in 1918. More Irish sailed in and out of those harbours, under the American flag, in the submarine-chasing of those days, than ever went West therefrom in the emigrant ships.

programme's significance. Suicidal desperation on the part of 'We' could go no further.

Sectional interests, says the economist, and dismisses their writhings in two words. Sectional interests, where a man tries to hold a million at the expense of the whole world. The six or seven used to be Big Men, in the hungry little island on the Atlantic edge. A million is a lot of money, and gives a lot of power, in a country where the average man tills ten acres lone-handed. But they are only pigmies, insignificant and irritating, in the giant line-up of capital and power now taking place between the Western democracies. Their day is done, and it is only just in time.

No reader must take the Irish peasant or socialist as being sentimentally concerned about the fate of Britain *per se*. If it were practicable to have the Western frontiers a few miles from Holyhead, instead of a few miles from Calais, why in the name of human selfishness and complacency should the Irish worry? But it will not do, even as a drunken dream of the quarter-Irish in certain English slums. If Britain went down in this war there would be no Ireland and no peasants and no Jim Phelans. Eventually there might be no more of those famous and lovable Irish cities, Boston and New York.

It will not do. Tipperary survives because Portsmouth is there. America will survive because Buncrana and Cobh are there. Britain will survive because America is there. We are all in the bloody basket together. The only real objections come from those who get no profit out of that particular basket.

Sectional interests. A few canal-owners tried insolently to prevent the British Railways from being built. (*They found* journalists who were *all right*, too.) But history dismissed them with a kick in the pants, and half a paragraph in the textbooks of economics. The machine-breakers who naïvely attempted to stop the industrialization of Britain do not get even half a paragraph. The 'We' gentlemen want to stop the organization of the West. Well, well.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Nazis in Ireland

THERE has always been some German influence in Ireland, north and south, since about 1911. It was never very powerful until about a year ago, when the success of rancher-cum-Belfast propaganda in Britain brought about a gradual squeezing and a widespread misrepresentation of the Irish in the south. Thereafter considerable numbers of people, shopkeepers, little merchants, larger farmers, and so on, were 'more open to reason', of the Nazi brand. Besides these there had been for some years the Cagoulard-imitating representatives of Irish Fascism, and those of northern business who 'of course' admired methods as good for trade. Violent acrobatics are necessary, for anyone desiring to weave the half-dozen clashing colours into a pattern! But the Nazis manage, fairly well, with the help of certain doubtless sincere journalists in Britain who furnish them with propaganda material free.

The German pull in Ireland was first felt in the north of the country, about thirty years ago. It has been fairly constant since, even before but especially since Hitler came to power. Its first (natural!) activity, back in 1912, was to foment and arm a rebellion against the British government. The success whetted the appetite, and needless to say the files at Unter den Linden were kept up to date. A man named Smith, a man named Carson, a man named Craig, were in the first rebellion-junta which defied the British and bought arms from the Germans to implement the defiance. They will be better known to general readers as Lord Birkenhead, Lord Carson, and Lord Craigavon. But the ennoblements came later, of course.

'Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right,' is fairly familiar.

to news-readers as the slogan of the loyal determined north, the ultra-British rulers of Belfast and district. Somehow it escapes general notice that 'fight' here means 'Fight against the British if there is any nonsense about a new deal in Ireland'. There has always been a close tie-up between the Ulster capitalists and the more reactionary newspapers in Britain. 'Good solid articles with a punch in them' glossed over the rebellion, appeased the rebellious, paved the way for ennoblements in terms of the fiction that has already been discussed. They also showed the way to the Germans. Back-door way, it suits the Germans to-day just as well as it suited them in 1912.

Some years later the Germans were on exactly the opposite side, in Ireland. Sinn Fein happened to be the protesting element at that time, and there was some German help leading up to the 1916 insurrection. Furthermore, many of the first guns for the Irish (republican) Volunteers came from Germany. The Casement story, and the attempt to form an Irish Brigade among Irish prisoners of war in Germany, is still remembered here. But the real job of 'infiltration' was done long after 1916, and before Hitler, automatically and well, by German Big Business.

The Shannon Scheme, as it was called, was an Alice-in-Wonderland attempt to complete the industrialization of Ireland at one jump. Harnessing the water-power of a river, to provide vast stores of electricity (mainly to light the cottages of peasants who could not afford a farthing candle) Siemens Gesellschaft sent enormous numbers of German workers to Ireland. There was no economic reason for it. The work was principally navvying. Wage-rates in Ireland—or the Irish Free State as that part was then called—were very low indeed. There were large numbers of unemployed in Ireland. Still Siemens sent their own people. (The average semi-literate peasant around Athlone knew precisely what was being done, even then. There is not much doubt that Whitehall knew also.) The Germans dug themselves in,

made themselves at home, even learnt Irish! The first fore-runners of the 'tourists', in fact.

They did their job. They did both jobs, well. In Westmeath and Galway and Limerick, as well as in Dublin, they familiarized the local residents with the spectacle of a decent, quiet, hard-working sympathetic populace—who bore up well under the harsh treatment meted out to them at Versailles. It was all true, too. Sympathetic they were, and understanding, in much the same way as some girls, are with misunderstood husbands. Furthermore they spoke the Gaelic—which many of the peasants had not then learnt. Finally, they knew 'The boys', and were familiar with the history of the recent rebellions.

Thus in the days leading up to the present war there was very little real work left for the Nazi propagandists to do. Almost every person worth spending money to convince *was* convinced (a) that the Nazis were being attacked and misrepresented; (b) that the English had no chance of winning the war. As regards the first item the accident of inter-island relations over the last few hundred years left the Irish populace only too ready to be convinced.

All that looks very bad, and there has been no attempt to minimize the effects of Nazi propaganda in these pages. It would be foolish. There is at present a very efficient Nazi propaganda service in Eire. (German diplomatic representatives, of course, are still in Dublin.) That service is doing a fine job of work in a business-like manner; its only major blunder is to be whipping the dead horse of hatred. They 'get in first' with interpretations of every development in the war. Always they are swift to make capital out of the ignorant or threatening articles about Eire in the British press.¹

¹ It is a moot point in the Fleet Street pubs to-day whether some of the most virulent misrepresentations of the Irish in one or two of the million-selling rags are not financed by Nazi-friends themselves—so that they can be attacked in Eire.—J. P.

The German programme in Ireland is a very simple and comprehensible programme indeed. The Irish are to remain 'destructively neutral' as long as possible, or if the opportunity arises are to declare war on Britain, or are to appeal for assistance if and when Britain makes any attacking move. The I.R.A. are to assist 'before the war' as far as is possible by anti-British acts, and to act as 'Sudetans' in proffering a welcome to the Nazis if Britain makes any threat. The peasants are to urge or force their government, under pressure of a threatened land-war, into breaking away from neutrality or facilitating Nazi invasion moves.

Practically every British newspaper knows that much, even if they seldom get it correctly aligned. Something hardly ever referred to here, indeed sedulously 'killed' in some journals for some reason, is the Irish reply. It consists as a rule of a single Gaelic word, familiar in America, 'Moryah.'¹

There is nothing surprising in the fact that the Nazi promises in Ireland are strangely contradictory, varying with the social group addressed. The peasants are to get more land. (Peasants will never discuss politics with anyone who does not commence precisely there.) Also they are to be rid for ever of and revenged upon the hated English. The Irish ranchers are to get the estates now rented in England (for themselves, not for their adjacent peasants), and to be rid for ever of and revenged upon the hated English. The I.R.A. is to get control of the government, in a Nazi-befriended Irish Republic, and to be rid forever of and revenged upon the hated English. The middlemen are to be guaranteed immunity (i.e. guaranteed that none of the changes just mentioned will take place) and allowed to progress peacefully as they have been doing, besides being rid for ever of and revenged upon the hated English.

Anyone who thinks optimistically about the chances of getting away with that kind of programme on the Irish is

¹ Anglice, 'Ses you.'

invited to remember that the Irish founded Tammany Hall, had seven centuries of *extremely valuable* political tuition at the hands of the British, and commence to talk politics before school-age. Call it fantastic, ludicrous, untrue—but check it—the only group with whom the Nazis have made any real headway is the armed underground group supporting the former Irish Free State pioneers. Those were already long ago committed to Fascism, on the strength of being financially interested in the reactionary elements in British politics! The crows are coming home.

It is not to be supposed that the Nazis have failed in Ireland, north or south. Even the propaganda-material available alone would have precluded that. They have a footing among the peasants, as anyone (including the I.R.A.) can if they promise more land. It is easy to get a footing among people squeezed and starved and worked to rags and rage, especially if they have only to look over a hedge to Heaven. (Let no one take for bitterness the reminder that two of the chief peasant songs in Ireland have as their theme-lines, respectively, 'We wish that we were geese—at in' corn,' and 'Over the hedge to heaven'.) Peasants in Eire, now as ever, have a tough time.

There is in Ireland something called the 'Congested Districts Board'. A rough British equivalent would be 'Committee for distressed areas'. Its job is to shift population from the unhealthily crowded districts and establish them economically. It was set up by the British, in their day, but never scratched far below the surface. In the De Valera administration several forward moves have been made, but the 'congestion' is still a bloody business in more senses than one.

The first thing that strikes a British reader, with regard to this Committee, is that it is strange, in a country half the size of Britain and with one-fifteenth of its population there should be acute problems of overcrowding. The second that occurs is that the Committee must be concerned with

the improvement of slums in Dublin or Belfast or other large cities.

The 'congestion' is the surf of landless or almost landless people referred to before, round the big estates. The Nazi's job, among the peasants, is half done for him. Fleet Street friends of the ranchers are busy doing the other half.

Only the Head Centre of the Irish Republican Brotherhood would know precisely how far the Nazis have got with their propaganda in Republican circles. But from the reactions of two or three subsidiary and fairly open bodies it is possible to make a rough judgment. Two things stand out immediately. After the Cagoulard-crowd, the Nazis in Ireland are pinning their faith to, and spending their money on, the I.R.A. There is a joke, Tipperary way, in republican crowds, that any well-dressed tramp possessing a second-hand revolver holster, a black slouch hat, and a suspicious appearance can get himself a fiver in practically any town he visits! (People who remember Paris in 1938, and the strangely-accented 'Bretons' who paid for drinks will understand.)¹

The other thing that springs to notice is that, apart from their English-hatred complex, the Nazi publicity-men in Ireland have got ours cold from the start. *They know the colloquial vocabulary, and the ideas on which it is based.*

When Hogue was on the sea, in the days while the yeomen were using the pitch-cap, the men of the West learnt to turn their gaze across the ocean in the search for the future of Grania Uaile. Not only the soldiers' song tells that some come across the wave; in every shebeen and bothy and higgler's shieling men know it to-day as they knew it when the boy from Kilann pushed over to succour Father Murphy at Boulavogue. What Tone laid and Smith O'Brien with the

¹ It may be of interest to recall that in Montparnasse in 1938, I received a lucrative offer for my brother Liam and myself, our suggested duties being to bring a thousand Irish Republicans to Brittany 'to fight for the plebiscite'. Of course I had no authority to do anything of the kind.

united men built, arm publacht will finish, and some have come, again, agus go hiffron leis an seasnach.

For a traffic-cop in Boston, Massachusetts, or a minor in Butte, Montana, or a farm-hand in Limerick, that passage would make sense. Except for a few moderately experienced people like the present writer, in Fleet Street, London, no one would understand it. To the British Secret Service it would be Choctaw. For the Nazis in Ireland it is part of the job that was started by Siemens Gesellschaft—just a job of work, done well.¹

It is a pep talk, roughly equivalent to the matter I, Jim Phelan from Tipperary, can write about Drake and the Armada, the Martello towers and the Rifle Volunteers. Old Contemptibles and the Anzacs and Suvla Bay. I know English history and colloquial speech; the British propagandists do not know Irish history; the Nazis know both. That gives Goebbels's boys a start in Ireland, which they are not slow to use.

They do not get much of a break in the Eire Press. Of the two biggest-selling organs, one is controlled by the Eire capitalists, the other is directed or owned by De Valera's own circle. The Nazi press in Ireland is largely a matter of bits 'sneaked in', in various small miraculously-surviving magazines and occasionally in the more solid and respectable organs of large capital and reaction. But it would seem, from their continued expenditure in Eire, that they are quite satisfied with their progress.

The expenditure is high. Just as anyone who looks like an I.R.A. commandant of *twenty years ago* and who knows a few phrases of Britain-hatred can count on financial fraternity, so any printers' devil down Fleet Street, Dublin, can be very certain of friendship from *someone* if only he has the sense to mention 'his' paper and use the vocabulary of 1921.

It sounds very silly, but Nazi publicists are not fools by

¹ Apologies to the Choctaw Indians. The word used by Britain's representative to describe such a form of speech is, rightly or wrongly, 'Hottentot.'

any means. They are building deeply, and trusting to events, and to the madness of the few reactionaries in London who still wield such power in inter-island affairs, to provide them with a 'situation'. If that happens, automatically their propaganda becomes valid—because it is all Irish commonplace and it is all true. The biggest lies in the world have always been truths told at the wrong time.

You keep a pot at the simmer, confident that the other fellow will be compelled by events to throw a few sticks on the fire. Whereupon it becomes obvious to all that the boiling-over is his fault. Everybody is doing it, now. The Nazis are expert in the technique. It worked in Norway and the Balkans, it is working now in Morocco, Iraq, and elsewhere. The Nazi methods in Ireland vary only in the degree of concentration and expenditure, because of Ireland's proximity to Britain, its position between Britain and America, and the fighting history of its people. Syria but more so, one might sum it up.

The British counter to those methods, in Ireland, need not be discussed here. Fortunately, as it happens, for Britain and the Irish.

Behind every response and potential response to the Nazi publicity among the Irish, there has been one belief, confirmed again and again by events, namely that the British had neither the time, the tools, nor the allies to stop the overwhelming assault of the Nazis. Anyone capable of considering the matter coolly will see the neutral nations' point of view. After Norway, the defeat in France, the debacle of Yugo-Slavia, the retreat from Greece, the entanglements in Syria and the Eastern Mediterranean, it was very easy indeed to fetch from the Irish a sigh of relief that they had not been such half-wits as to butt into *that* squabble on the wrong side.

Neutrals, small and large, are like that. The Nazi long-term policy in Ireland moved always closer to complete justification. Moreover and inevitably, every British setback

strengthened De Valera's hand in his own country. No matter how sincere he and his people were, it suited the Nazis just the same. While the few Irish writers who regard Ireland's survival as dependent upon Britain's survival had nothing contrary to offer in the way of facts.

The prescription is a simple one, and unchangeable. To sway a neutral anywhere a nation at war must show that it is strong, is certain to win, or that its victory is indispensable to the neutral. In that field, the British Foreign Office had a 'hard row to hoe', until very recently indeed. Not least of all in Ireland, where sectional interests on their own side make useful propaganda difficult and almost impossible.

So, in the early Autumn of 1941, the men in charge of German propaganda in Ireland sit back with the satisfaction that comes from an important work well done. Peasants, I.R.A., shopkeepers, sincerely disinterested neutrals, ranchers even, they are all in the bag. Surprisingly simple the job has been, too. It was hardly necessary to do more than tell the simple truth. Britain's strength, Britain's guarantee of victory, Britain's indispensability to Ireland—where were they? For without them there could be no spokes put in the Nazi wheel. Sieg Heil.

They have forgotten, or dare not remember, the biggest chapter in Ireland's history. It was easy, for them and for the British, to forget, because it was not so openly-dramatic as the other chapters, and was not written in blood but in sweat and coins. The Nazis have driven home large quantities of well-conceived propaganda about the Great Famine in Ireland. They ignored the vastly significant sequel.

Ireland is an American state in everything but name. It would be easier to persuade the British to declare war on Australia than to line the Irish up on the opposite side to the Americans. The linking of the Western nations is more decisive than any piddling victory in Europe as a guarantee of Britain's strength and winning-power and her importance for the survival of the Irish.

The Nazis built well, in Ireland. They raised a splendid, cleverly-constructed edifice of fact-and-interpretation which was *certain* to withstand the attack of every footling misguided uninformed British protagonist, hampered by the confusion of interests on his own side and discredited in advance by the known facts of the war up to the present. It seems almost a shame that such a shrewd and carefully-executed plan should come to nothing, and that the edifice should have been built on a plot bearing the indelible sign 'Anti-nazi. Keep out.'

In the light of the American Government's present activities, and the alignment of the Democratic Party plus the American Irish, only a miracle of stupidity or atavistic 'wangling' on the British side can withhold the native Irish from co-operation and initiative on the side of their myriad relatives across the Atlantic. Coolly and objectively, I suggest that if any few attempt that miracle in the name of Britain it would be a terrible mistake and waste of time even to give them a trial.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Snags and Delays

THE solution of Anglo-Irish problems which is being suggested and developed in these pages calls for little more than elementary self-interest from all the groups involved except a few crooks who do not count. At the same time, two or three factors exist which might make for hesitation and waste of time. Delay is about as dangerous an injury to Britain and Ireland as can be imagined. But it is possible and must be prepared against.

The reference is not to the inevitable pettifogging delays which will come from those who want the world to stand still for their profit and eventual loss. One group in Britain, and two in Ireland, may justifiably hesitate and seek evidence before committing themselves to a step forward. Men always do that kind of thing when political steps forward are necessary. Common sense would anticipate it.

The small farmers in Ireland—one ignores the 'Border'; the class is the same and its problems are similar throughout the island—occupy a middle position between the peasants and the ranchers. Just as their own particular political group stands midway between the Irish Republicans and the Friends Of (former) Britain. These people *could* lose everything they own, almost in a night, by backing any side not absolutely certain to win, in the present world struggle. It is hard to blame them for their side-stepping. They have had a rough political history and a long record of misfortune. It is necessary to furnish proof, so that they may not be responsible for the loss of days or weeks more valuable to the Nazis than military victories.

The difficulty, with these people, arises from the fact that they have, apparently, before their eyes an object lesson that

the Nazis mean them no harm. It is a delusion, but it will have to be shown as such, immediately. The example is the immunity from any oppression of Denmark.

British readers, and even news-editors, are often startled by some casual reference to the closeness of the ties between Denmark and Ireland. This lack of knowledge is conditioned by the fact that agriculture in Britain and Ireland is not the same thing. With a mass of peasants, and a large number of small farmers, Ireland inevitably gravitated towards the Danish methods rather than the English. The Danes taught them, too.

Like a red rag to a bull, in the eyes of some Right People, is a fact hardly ever mentioned in British writings about Ireland. Small-farming, with its alliance of peasant-production, is a near-socialistic business in Ireland north and south. The farmers work through creameries. Seed and implements are sold. Milk is bought. The creameries are co-operative, not profit-seeking. The Danish system, in fact.

Danish instructors set up the creameries. Danish firms had a monopoly in the manufacture and supply of implements for dairying. (Natural enough—no one else had the experience or the plant. British or Irish factories did not turn out products adapted to small-scale co-operative agriculture.) Burmeister and Wain, of Copenhagen, are the largest Irish firm in dairy-retail. Their Dublin premises, even as long ago as 1910, were an impressive spectacle.

Besides this, the products and the people being much the same (except for the I.R.A., of which the Danes had no counterpart!) it was inevitable that intercourse between the two countries should be friendly and creative. It still is, to an extent that transcends mere business interest.

So, for thirty-odd years, there was a swapping of ideas and methods, the Danes always being just a *little* ahead because they had no ranchers and no friends thereof to contend with. Until 1940, when Denmark suddenly ceased to be a free co-operative.

After the over-running of the Danes, anti-Nazi reactions in Ireland were strong.¹ Naturally no one in Britain took the slightest notice. Apparently no knowledge of the similarity between the two countries had percolated through the screen of mis-statement. At any rate, only Nazi comment reached the small farmers of Ireland.

Nazi comment, which meets with no contradiction, is to this effect: Denmark was a quiet, neutral little country, which was on the point of being overrun by the British, as a jumping-in place for Norway. They were genuinely neutral, and as such, 'of course' suffered no hardships at the hands of the Nazis until sheer military necessity made it imperative to anticipate the British. Thereafter, and swiftly, their fairness and industry were rewarded by the absence of any penalization whatever. Denmark has lost nothing, except the British market. Which is unimportant now, especially when an even bigger Nazi market can take all that Denmark can produce. The co-operatives have not been touched.

That statement consists mostly of lies, but they will have to be proved, so that the Irish small farmers will not be wasting De Valera's time, or Roosevelt's. It is disconcerting to say the least, that up to now we have only had 'blah' about the wicked Nazis killing the cows.

That kind of thing means nothing at all to people in Britain or America—industrial countries not co-operative. If it is considered wise to print statements about Denmark at all, simple common-sense would appear to dictate that they should be directed where they would be understood and would produce reactions favourable to the British. (Or is there some esoteric principle involved, which a mere

¹ Four days after the swamping of Denmark by the Nazis, I wrote an article stressing its importance as Irish propaganda, for an editor who thinks highly of my work. It was rejected, and an article was printed instead saying that Sean Russell and 'a well-known Irish writer' were in Berlin fixing up the invasion with Hitler, and suggesting that the Irish naval bases should be occupied by force. One may now write *Verb Sap.*, and be excused the levity of asking who was the Sap.—J. P.

professional writer could not hope to understand?). John Smith of Sheffield, England, or Jonathan Smehhdy of Philadelphia, Pa., is simply left cold by stories about people killing cows. Of course soldiers kill cows, if they are hungry—little more than that is the reaction produced in Britain by such news.

But the destruction of the co-operatives—that is big news, except to those who think destroying co-operatives a jolly good idea. It is big news to the Irish small-farmers; in fact it would prove that the Nazis are as bad as the bloody English used to be in the terrible days talked about round the fire at night. Believe one Irish peasant that no greater condemnation is necessary!

It would of course be presumptuous and undignified to suggest the manner in which the facts of the Danish invasion should be used. But for the general reader it might be of interest to indicate how the important details can be verified and promulgated without the loss of a day. The Executive of the Dairy Co-operative at Kjobnhavn can furnish the figures. Their organization has almost been wiped out. Burmeister and Wain can furnish the figures. They have suffered very great loss—and they are as well known among Irish farmers as Woolworth's in America or Britain.

That way the little men who are such a large proportion of Ireland's populace will have all their time-wasting doubts and hesitations removed. If the peasant is the wispeen of straw that points the tempest, those people can be the tempest.

'Aye,' said an Irish politician, when these things and the preceding arguments of this book were discussed with him. 'Aye, that'd quicken things—and then ye get a shower o' bombs on Dublin the next night, yes? Now, is Dublin to take it just because Jim Phelan says so?'

That may not sound very heroic, but it is very human. The man concerned has proved his own physical courage a score of times, like many in Ireland. But *why should Dublin*

take it, if it can be avoided at all? To save time, let it be postulated that the Irish working people, unlike those of other nations perhaps are not at all interested in honour and dignity and international rectitude. And it is they, especially in Dublin, who would have the final say, in a country which gets part of the way at least to being a democracy. They are interested in themselves.

There have been bombs on Dublin before, British, Irish, and German. The city has been destroyed, by fire and bombardment, several times. Twice in our own time the Dubliners have seen their city 'go up'. It is not mere undiluted fear that would cause hesitation about adopting a course that would almost certainly bring 'a shower of bombs on Dublin the next night'. But it is very common sense, for people with nothing at all to lose except badly paid jobs or the right to sneak across Channel and join the British Air Force or work in a munition factory. Like the man from Missouri, they have to be shown.

They can be shown that they would get the shower of bombs on Dublin just the same, even if they had waited until the losing end of a war that would slave them anyway. (It is very hard to slave a man who is hungry to start with, but it can be managed.) If they waited until Britain fell, then either the Nazis would be perfect gentlemen and keep all their conflicting promises or they would not. That would remain to be seen. After Britain and America had been finished off,

Assume (reader: remember we are great people for political argument, and I am arguing with the Dublin workmen now) assume that a near-beaten Britain and a desperately-threatened America would not even *dream*, under the direst necessity, of infringing the sacred neutrality of any island whatever. Every British ship and every battered American war-vessel, making west from defeated Britain for another stand across the ocean, would naturally face straight out into the Atlantic. If any touched, a neutral Ireland would intern

them. Even if the number reached to say five times Eire's population. Three million starving people (for Eire would be starving by that time) would intern endless millions of others because those are the rules. They would feed them and camp them and keep them, going down into rot and famine themselves because they could not interfere and could not ask for interference, since those are the rules. And the Nazis would from a distance pat Eire on the shoulder and praise her punctilious neutrality.

Moryah.

There is no real need to take such a ludicrous, extreme, hypothetical case, except to kick the props from under the ridiculous assumptions of those who think these islands can stand separately in a war like the present. In the long run it means this: that Dublin is 'for it' sooner or later, either defenceless or defended, in this war, because of its position. Neutrality and procrastination did not save Rotterdam.

The Nazi explanation is that the British were *just going* to invade Holland and they had to protect it. That is very unlikely, on the face of it, but assume it to be true for the moment. Rotterdam was splashed out in six hours.

The difference between Dublin and Rotterdam is that Eire is a neutral and Holland was a neutral.

There is one other difference. Rotterdam lasted six hours. London and Birmingham have lasted twelve months and are still there. The difference between being splashed out and taking it is the difference of having fighter-planes overhead and Yankee ships outside. The difference to Dublin might be Dublin.

British and American readers will notice that the argument is directed at the working people of Dublin and no one else. That is the only approach, for if there is going to be 'a shower of bombs on Dublin' they will have to take it. In the long run they will decide whether they would rather risk it with the defence of the whole West, or face the certainty defenceless. Those who know Dublin need not bother about the

decision. The only reason for putting it here is because there is no time to waste in half-way argument.

Only one group of people in Britain is likely to cause delay in facilitating the settlement of the Eire problem. They are very sincere, zealous, industrious people for the most part, but they have done and are doing grave injuries to the British people. They should not be permitted to injure the American or Irish people, because it is only fair to stop a man from committing suicide, and that would be suicide. The civil servants of Britain will delay the arrangement which the reader will be shaping for himself by this time, if they are permitted.

They have a terrible record in Irish-British affairs, partly the result of a bad tradition, but mainly an outcome of their continued contact only with people who Are Right. A stamped postcard to F. D. Roosevelt, Esq., Washington, telling him they were in receipt of his of even date which would be dealt with in due course would be *nothing* to that curious collection of museum-pieces, the British Civil Service. The only miracle would be if it *were* sent on even date, and not six or eight months later. It would be ghastly if anyone should take these statements as facetious. Best, perhaps, is to state that British Civil Servants, by their lunatic delays, tortuous mental processes, and baseless insolence of outlook, caused many deaths in Ireland during 'the troubles'. They will do worse, in the organization of the Western peoples, if they are allowed.

The trouble about jokes against the Civil Service is that they are all true. In Irish affairs the dilatory and insolent among those people had *carte blanche* for a long time. The tradition among them, sedulously cultivated by long contact with planter-people, is that the Irish are 'natives'! That would be amusing, as it would be amusing to have one of those well-meaning, indifferently-educated persons of the lower middle class kindly teaching, say, Liam O'Flaherty or Jim Phelan how to spell, or looking round for his shillelagh

and whisky-bottle when he called. But it was not very funny in 1920 and 1921, when scores of good men were jailed or killed merely as a result of departmental delays, red-tape routine and deliberate dignified quasi-judicial stupidity. It will not be funny if they are allowed to hamper the organization of Britain, America, and the Atlantic.

Unfortunately, these Civil Servants are not the black-hearted, coldly-unscrupulous villains many Irish believe them to be. Any more than the Irish farmers are sadistic machiavellians, deliberately withholding a tiny scrap of help so that Britain may be inconvenienced. If they were it would be easier to attack them. Unfortunately, they are sincere, devoted, well-trained servants of the (). Well, leave a blank there before reading 'of the British people'. They know nothing about the British people, but they will have to learn. Hitherto, almost since the Civil Service was instituted, they have been devoted and zealous servants of reaction. Now, reaction will have everything to gain from making delays in *re* the doorstep of the Atlantic.

Need for more?

CHAPTER NINE

Why Not? Because . . .

MOST readers will have noted—perhaps with irritation—that throughout this book there have been but few suggestions as to what the British, Eire, and American governments should *do*. Instead there has been an analysis of the various groups which pull—or push—the various governments along the lines followed at present. Those groups are the wheels of the wagon in which British, Irish, and Americans find themselves thrown higgledy-piggledy to-day. Get the wheels straightened up and the wagon will go, without talking at it.

Postulate these things, or strike them out:

(a) The British government earnestly desires a settlement in Ireland, because the Irish airports and harbours might be a grave danger and can be vitally important in defending the Atlantic.

(b) The Eire government wants to do the best possible for its own people and above all for the main groups supporting it.

(c) The American government cannot and dare not be a party to leaving the Atlantic undefended to the maximum. Nor can it be a party to any mailed-fist methods in Ireland.

(d) The Irish Republicans, in Ireland, would objurgate against and be a potential menace to any agreement which reduced Ireland's status, or which did not yield republican status for the whole country.

(e) Some persons in the republican and other organizations want to see the British defeated at any cost whatever. So do some British and some French and some Americans and some Greeks. The first-named group must not be counted as supporters of an Irish Republic since they do not desire anything of the kind.

(f) The peasants in Ireland want more land. Nothing more need be said about their politics.

(g) The Nazi government wants Ireland kept as it is to-day.

(h) The Belfast industrialists, and the Unionist Association behind them (i.e. the Irish Monarchist Brotherhood, as it were) want Britain to win the war. They pledged Mr. Andrews, their Premier, unqualified support in whatever steps he thinks necessary to win the war and aid Winston Churchill.

(i) The Irish farmers want to be certain they will not lose their farms. Alongside of these the Irish small-traders want to be certain they will not lose their capital.

(j) The ranchers' representatives want Ireland kept as it is to-day.

(k) Shareholders in northern factories want to be certain their capital is not going to be divided up among a lot of unprogressive peasants.

(l) Winston Churchill, Lord Beaverbrook, Ernest Bevin, others in the British Government, do not desire to take anything away from the Irish people.

(m) Some persons in Conservative and other organizations want to see the Eire government defeated at any cost whatever. This group must no longer be counted as protagonists of a Western victory, since they do not desire anything of the kind.

(n) The Irish working people would rather not be called upon to fight, unless they are certain they will be severely injured if Britain loses.

(o) The English working people for the most part want to have the help of a people they consider good fighters. Further than this they do not know much about war-issues.

(p) The Irish-Americans wish to be certain they are not to be assimilated as work-people for Nazism.

(q) The strategical and political importance of Ireland has increased vastly since the co-alignment of the Western peoples.

Impatient injunctions that the groups mentioned should shut up and get on with the war do not help, and indeed are worth anything from a fiver to three hundred pounds a time to the Nazis. All the people concerned, except groups *e*, *g*, *j*, and *m*, are getting on with the war, as they think right. Examination will show that there is not a great deal of wrong thinking either, by contemporary standards. The situation has altered, that is all, and the errors have to be

dragged out in the open and eliminated. Admonitions to silence will not do anything but keep the pot simmering.

One terrible fallacy in British (public, not Governmental) thinking must be removed at once. The tendency is to make the Irish question a matter of addition or subtraction. If the Nazis hold Ireland, one to Hitler. If they do not hold Ireland, one to the West. The situation is not thus at all. It is much worse than that. Churchill knows, and Roosevelt, and the American naval advisers, and the Irish writers who have for months been advocating what were laughed away as fantasies at first.

The first fantasy was that Winston Churchill should call the northern loyalists to London and in effect ask them to prove their loyalty. That is being done, a year after it was laughed at as ridiculous.

The second fantasy was that common sense should recognize that quarter of an island was worse than useless to Britain, and that the quarter should cease to be a senile preoccupation. That is being recognized, months after it was called 'dangerous nonsense'.

The third fantasy was that the Democratic administration should pick one of the many Irish-American diplomats and send him to Ireland to ask for 'Little America's' co-operation on behalf of 'Greater Ireland'. It is being done now, after every editor in Fleet Street almost had dismissed it as ridiculous 'because it meant *Convoys*'.

The fourth fantasy was that the Irish Republican Army should be treated as a military body of fine desperate fighters with huge financial backing instead of so many dead-head voters in a gerrymandered election. (Some archaic thinkers did not 'recognize' Masaryk's legion twenty-three years ago, because they had no territory and no votes. Winston Churchill was not among the number.) Face the fact—the I.R.A. and 'Free France'.

The fifth fantasy is a fact, if one may inflict the long-postponed but inevitable Hibernicism. The 'complete

separation of Ireland', which used to keep Tory Colonels awake at night and which was spoken of with bated breath even by Republican propagandists, has almost imperceptibly come to pass. Otherwise why are a hundred and eighty million people patiently arguing with four millions, as we are doing here and has been practical politics for the more enlightened British leaders since the dissipation of the Chamberlain regime?

The Irish writers urged these things that are now being advocated or recognized, because they knew, what the British public does not yet know, that there is no mere plus-or-minus reckoning of Ireland in a war where Britain and America are linked. The Nazis do not *have to* have Irish help in order to win. The Western nations must have Irish help in order not to lose.

Well—let them lose, then.

Groups *e*, *g*, *j*, and *m* will make the rejoinder. *No other, unless it be some collection of Britain's pseudo-friends.* Or unless the 1866-brand of reactionaries have their way. De Valera and his small-men will not make it. The alleged Republicans of the Death-for-England profession would not be attacking them if the rejoinder were likely. Mouthing their cheap outworn claptrap, as unlike the code of the I.R.B. as an I.L.P'er's twisted ratinocinations are unlike socialist propaganda, at so many marks per word, those people know the terrible danger (to them) of the small-man's pathetic desire to be reasonable. Neither the farmers nor the peasants will make it, when they know about Denmark. Nor the Eire small-capitalists, already trembling on the brink of an appeal to America themselves. (It may have been made before this book appears, even.) The ranchers will not dare to make it, nor Big Business, for fear of swift retribution from an infuriated West. All they will dare is delay, or the attempt to stifle such discussion as this. But that is a bad second-best, now.

Well, the farmers and middlemen will delay, too, if they

are let. And a man might as well delay about pressing a fire-alarm because the fire hasn't got down to him yet. They have been scraping and shaving in a little weak social progress for years, hoarding and adding to the total year by year, and they would be thinking it a good thing to go on. Now after Holland they can be shown their potential future under Nazism. You put a pound a week in the bank. That is a thousand pounds in nineteen years or so; all you have to do is to go on for another nineteen years—if someone doesn't take the bank *and banking* round about the twentieth year. Can the middlemen be shown that the British and Americans aren't after the bank, too?

Eagerly and urgently, nowadays, people are coming to the question, 'What should the British Government *do*?' Whatever it is, they imply, let it be done quickly. The answer is either a chilled-steel syllogism or fantasy number six, whichever way the reader likes to describe it. The British Government should do nothing.

Like it or otherwise, Britain's financial and social interests in this field and phase of the war are secondary now. Vast as her wealth and influence and populace are, they rank second to the gigantic stakes of the United States, now openly threatened in the East-West rending of the world. If Britain goes down, America north and south will have to fight for twenty years—if they last so long. Ireland is more important to America than Malta or Gibraltar to Britain. Malta could go, with a shrug of the shoulders, and the war be won just the same. Gibraltar can be made unhealthy—it only means taking the long way round. But Ireland is America's doorstep, far out-ranking Guam and the Philippines and Honolulu. Every cobble-stone on Buncrana quay, every fathom of water in Cobh Harbour, is worth a million dollars to the America of to-day and to-morrow.

If they could be bought for money, which they cannot for political and not moral reasons, the airports and navy, harbours of Ireland would be worth a bribe of, say, five

thousand dollars to every man, woman, and child in Ireland. (And that would be less than the cost of a year of war!) They can be had for nothing, 'and welcome' as the Irish say, if the matter is handled properly—and the Yanks know plenty about treating important people Right. Even if they haven't fifteen million cousins back home.

Is any middleman, haggler, rancher-friend, small capitalist or big business man licking his lips because the Irish seem to have struck on a marvellous trading-proposition without realizing it? Let him cease to lick lest he have no lips, for that is the issue and not pennies. \$22,000,000,000 a year of full-out war would cost the States, at the very least. Realizations of that nature have prompted their activities in Guam, Manila, Cuba, Honolulu, and elsewhere. The Yanks are cunning.

(Have they not a myriad from the peasant-stock among them, even and especially in international representation? Why wouldn't they be, and they in Big Business too? No one needs to be told that an Irish Republican Socialist is no idolator of Big Business anywhere, but efficiency as against hampering tradition and conscious generosity against cheeseparing at least get scientific approval.)

Did anyone ever think of offering the Eire government, the I.R.A., the peasants, middlemen, and other objectors, £4,380,000,000 in douceurs? But a year of war costs more than that. There would be no sale, anyway, but contrast the size of the possible offer with the niggling mean sordid haggings that have been going on so long between the two islands, in the interests of a very few men. There has been profit in delay, for some people, and indeed it is fortunate that Britain's interests on the Atlantic are secondary now. The British Government need do nothing.

Count it, or imagine it, merely in money and in nothing more. How many years of war-cost is it worth to Britain that America should survive, and to America that Britain shall remain the buffer? Those things America is realizing

clearly and more clearly at present. Britain could not be allowed to go down. It is precisely the same thing as saying Ireland could not be allowed to go down, so far as the States are concerned.

The Atlantic is everything now. For months the battle of the ships-above-and-below has been going on, with, from the Nazis' point of view, quite good results. The figures as announced are serious. Everyone in Britain knows it. This, with the raiders operating only from distant bases.

Nazi raiders working from Lough Swilly or Cobh would quadruple their attacking-power. Western ships defending from those harbours would have some sixteen times their present validity, because the raiders would still be out-post while the defenders would still be home (only more so!).

But the peasants want more land and the I.R.A. want a republic and De Valera changed the name of the place from Part-Ireland to the Gaelic word for All-Ireland and the working people want guarantees and the capitalists mainly want safety for large sums representing often as much as two hours of war and very very big business would faint if it weren't sure of its profits which used to look huge but beside the defence bills of the West resemble a child's sweetie-money, and the ranchers want the peasants not to have more land and besides . . .

And besides, some of the least dignified people in the world will start to talk about honour just at that point. Their equivalents did it in the Philippines, and they did it in Guam, and they tried for years to do it in Honolulu. But that kind of rat doesn't get away with it on the United States. The soulless Yank, worshipping the almighty dollar, knows that brand of honour well. Often it comes dear, in the open market but more often, on that side of the Atlantic, it gets a kick in the pants, because of judicious generosity among those who clamour only for dollars and dimes and roods of earth.

It is a peasant way of saying that if only the British Government will stop a few Right People from prating their shameless shibboleths about integrity and nobleness, and a few, halfwit 'well-informed sources' from taking unto themselves the wholly-baseless authority to speak for 'We', the people of Guam and Ireland will look after themselves and the oceans. Blarney-cum-logic does not only belong to peasant writers. The Americans can 'fix' that Irish problem in a week of gossip-and-whisky, between a few of their nicely named diplomats with the Irish faces and a few people of all the Irish.

Either it is a good thing to do as suggested by the prehistoric fellow who wanted to talk about tanks and troop movements or it is not. If it is good to 'pile every etcetera all ready to jump in' and lose the air-fields and the harbours and eventually the Atlantic—maybe someone will convince the Americans about it. If it is a bad thing—since when has it been recognized? At the only conference that was held the 'pile every . . .' beliefs were only hinted at. But they were the background to most of the talk.

That is very silly. It is ships we are dealing with, *ships*—things sailing out on the Atlantic with food for the British and bombs for the Nazis. Ships—not the Fenian rising of 1867. Not a treacherous attempt on the part of the world's most sincere neutral to hand over the ports to the Nazis. Not the 'ferocious O'Flaherty's, come back across the sacred Border to fling the planters off their land. Not the Catholic Church, coming to persecute the faithful, as it did in the days when a Catholic was a convict. Not the I.R.A. coming over the frontier to—what would it be, now?—go take over the jobs in the factories. Ships. Food. Guns. Planes. Life. Life from America. Ships.

If the misguided among the British still have sufficient influence to make delays, then the Irish and the Americans will have to fix it up by themselves. But it would be nicer to have a kind of All-Atlantic party working the thing,

because of course it is Britain and the R.A.F. and the British Navy that the Yanks are really backing to save them a decade of war at home. Ireland just happens to be in the middle of the boxing-ring.

When the first food-ships reached the Irish coast last June the solution propounded here was already a fact, if only people had hurried to recognize it and act upon the knowledge. We got mockery at Irish hunger instead, and threats that the food had to be used 'actually for democracy' whatever that may mean, but it sounded nice and menacingly suggestive.

That is not how Guam bristled up in the sea. Nor how Manila was made safe, in the face of a populace at first antagonistic which the Irish are not. Now let it be stopped and leave the Americans alone to save themselves a few billion dollars and us a few million lives.

With all impartiality, honour, justice, and decorum, I must now indicate that the Irish peasants should have more land in this Atlantic stronghold. I put it first, not of course because my people are peasants but because even by the most degraded capitalist standards it is silly to have men hungry if no one even gets any profit out of it. Also, but secondly, because the peasants might be handy if there were any fighting near their sacred, valuable, and newly enlarged 'estates'. My bias happens to be towards helping peasants and at the same time insuring people like myself from visiting the Nazi headsman. That is not very noble, but it cannot be helped.

The Ulster capitalists will have to be guaranteed their profits, since that cannot be helped. We live in a profit-world, and only a fool would expect business-organizers from either side of the Atlantic to behave like William Morris. It is a simple matter to ensure that the shareholders of, say, Harland and Wolffs or the textile mills will not have their hard-earned money taken away from them by a lot of natives.

Those are the two extremes of the economic problem which has been concealed as political for so long, and with such manifest advantage for some. Anyone who can picture a minute collection of Irish middle-people attacking Britain and America combined will accept the reiterated statements that the Belfast capitalists are 'in danger'. With those two extremes examined *in the open* and dealt with, the middle groups will and can make neither objections nor delays. But the statement of the case for the peasants and the northern capitalists will have to be public, not a hole-and-corner business of ambiguous phrases *screening intentions undeclared*.

It has become increasingly difficult for little-farming people to mask their penny-lack under the guise of love for Ireland, and for the Belfast industrialists to metamorphose a pre-occupation with profit into passionate loyalty to the British Crown. But it can still be managed—there was ample evidence of that, only recently. The reason is that the traditional methods of making political and economic decisions still hold nearly good. Far too nearly for Britain's good, or America's.

The traditional methods are to cast round for nice labels for your ambitions, such as The Soul Of Ireland, Devotion To The Crown, Irish Freedom Undeified, or Our British Heritage. Then you have a spot of lunch with the right people, and find a few journalists who are *all right*, and find one or two men with a pull who are already committed, economically, to the same beliefs as yourself. *Et voila*—the soul of Ireland, or the British heritage, as the case may be. Faugh! It stinks. A particularly mephitic aroma comes just now from the same direction as the slogan 'Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right'. It may mean the death of America, that breath of poison. May. But the Yanks are cunning, praise be.

It is common knowledge that the Nazis have been sitting back in Ireland, for nearly two years, trusting that the British will provide them with a 'situation'. Desperately threatened

(i.e. seeing themselves forced into being decent citizens without medieval privilege), the Ulster capitalists are attempting, now, to present Hitler with his long-awaited situation. And not one of them has ever taken a pound of German money. Quite the contrary.

Of course it would be a grave infringement of 'National Honour' and racial integrity to permit another nation to interfere in 'Our' problems'. That is to say, it would be if it was still 1910 or thereabouts. A Tory Foreign Secretary of the old school would have gone off pop at the idea of having a lot of foreigners walking round London in khaki, or at the mere thought of letting America have the British Naval bases out West, or of asking for American destroyers. Even a little while pre-Churchill such things would have been used to make trouble instead of peace. Now they are political commonplaces, and people know there is and can be only one West.

Why, then, cannot 'foreigners', to wit the greatest allies Britain has ever dreamt of, directly and swiftly interfere in a matter which concerns their own survival? Why cannot the American Government be given *carte blanche* to 'interfere', in a problem everyone knows they can solve within a few weeks, and which British departmental methods have made a festering sore in the otherwise healthy body of the West? Why not?

Is it because Eire is, under international law, perfectly at liberty *now* to secede from the British Empire and join the American Union, but would not because it could endanger their own people in the north, one-third of Northern Ireland's population? Definitely not that.

Is it because Winston Churchill and those near him do not want all-out American aid, and are too hide-bound to make new and startling decisions in face of the changed situation? Not that either. Again and again Churchill has shown a vast adaptability, and has reaped the benefit of his elasticity.

Is it because the British people would be horrified at the

thought of the Americans using part of 'their'(!) territory? They would weep with relief in London when it was announced.

Is it because the Irish people would object to having the peaceful ports of Buncrana and Cobh ¹ and the rest bristling with American arms, alive with American ships, and the towns a rush and roar of 'Yankee' lorries and sailor-folk? They have had precisely that before, and liked it.

Is it because the farmers and peasants and shopkeepers would object to the 'Interference' of a nation in which each Irish household has from two to five members resident? The only miracle is that they have been restrained from *fighting* for that solution so long.

See Guam, in the magnificent 'March of Time' film. Or the American defences at Manila, in a dozen good magazines. Or the things that were done, on a titanic scale, in Hawaii. Contrast them with the ghastly medieval bit-and-patch blundering which leaves those ports semi-derelict now, because of the lack of a little swift shrewd generosity, a pre-occupation with outworn phrases about loyalty, which were lies in 1912 and are lies now, and a further senseless pre-occupation with a nursery-economy of shillings where milliards are at stake. Contract those things, and ask again the question, 'Why not?'

Because . . .

Reader, you must rake the columns of *The Times*, of 1912 and 1922, for the answer. There would be less profit for some few—that is the answer. If that be not attempted suicide, and near to murder, then Chamberlain's palterers were right, and we had better sell the British Navy to Hess, and prepare, those of us who have consistently attacked Nazism, for the headsman. For no reader will find any answer to the question 'Why not' except in the mean cheap

¹ Buncrana, Timbertown by Cobh, and Castletown were crammed with American naval units in 1918, when they did the same 'sub-chasing' job that screams for activity to-day.

phrases of Britain's Friends. It will not be found in Britain.

Guam or an empty Lough Swilly? Niggling prolonged quarrel between the mighty British Empire and the fistful of middlemen. *An expenditure of millions in a ludicrous kindergarten attempt to make the Irish appear 'aggressors'* or a quick clean-up in the Atlantic. There is the choice for the British. It must be made now, or the Nazis will make it for us.

Will you lose everything you have, or accept the protection of the United States? That is the choice for the Irish, on both sides of Mr. Lloyd George's frontier. All those south, and one-third of those north of that frontier, will jump for the opportunity, or even force it later, if all else fails.

Provided no one uses the fatal word 'Protectorate' there will be no delay from the Irish. From the controllers of the northern industrialists there would come at first the ancient claptrap, but one word from Winston Churchill can shut that down. Have they not pledged him unqualified support in anything he decides.

A scream of outraged virtue will come from the ranchers and their journalistic 'contacts'. Well, a ranch is a big place, agreed, and a pretty sight, and a nice source of revenue, if only history will stand still. But it's just a cottage garden and a child's money-box compared with what Britain and America have to lose. And the ranchers will lose *it all* anyway unless the Western nations control the Atlantic at once. Let them scream.

There will be no other objections, except from those incapable of accepting the concomitants of the vast world-changes taking place around us. But every government, since government commenced, has had to deal with the politically senile.

Guam—and no limping past Buncrana for a re-fit four days away across threatened seas. Manila—and a sixteen-times saving in force for Atlantic defence. Hawaii—and the survival of Ireland and America, with a surviving Britain

ineluctably concomitant. The Irish Republic—and one of the loveliest legions ever armed, to show paces in the same boastful manner as their cousins-ten-removes from Australia. Ships. Food. Planes. Bombs. Survival.

This is Eastern Massachusetts, and this is Jim Phelan telling the obsolete in politics to make way for America's Baby.

